

SPORT

NOV. 60¢

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Debates
Bill Curry:
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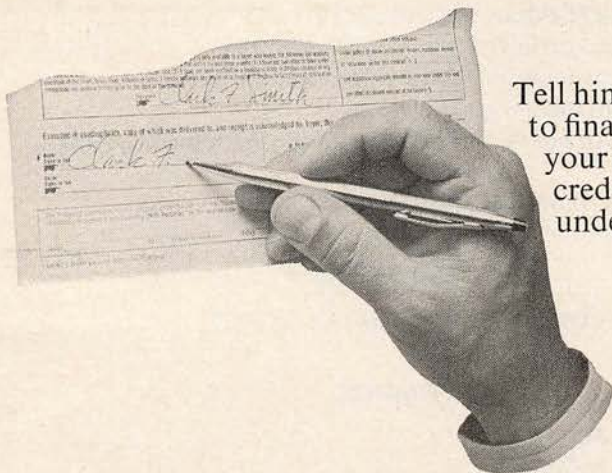
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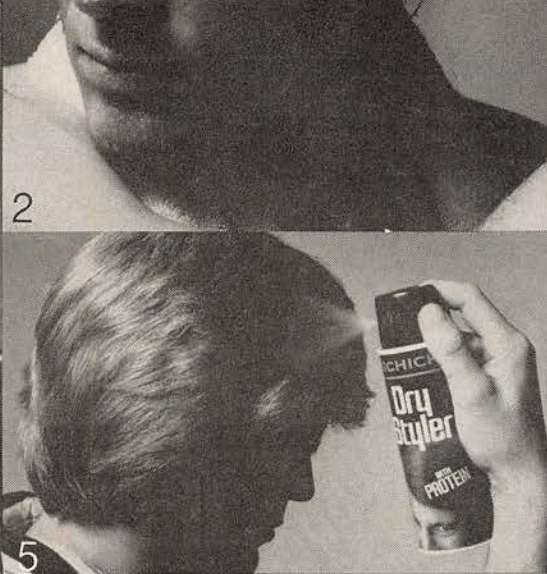
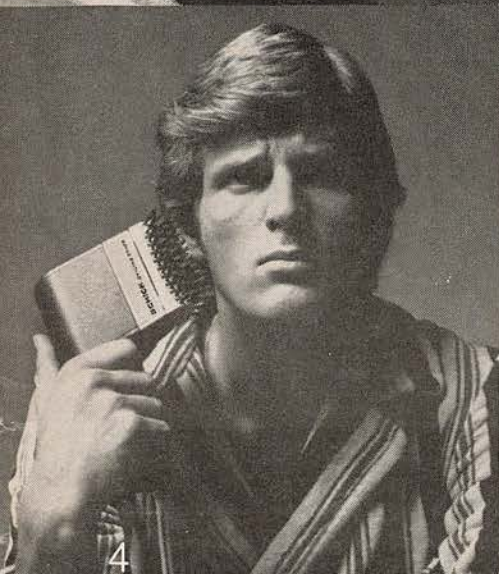
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COVER CREDIT

Otis Taylor MARTIN BLUMENTHAL

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Arizona Cookout

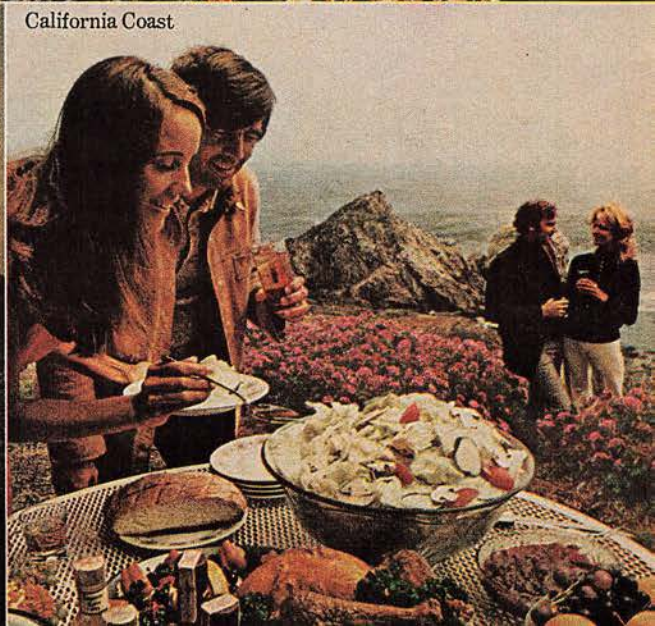


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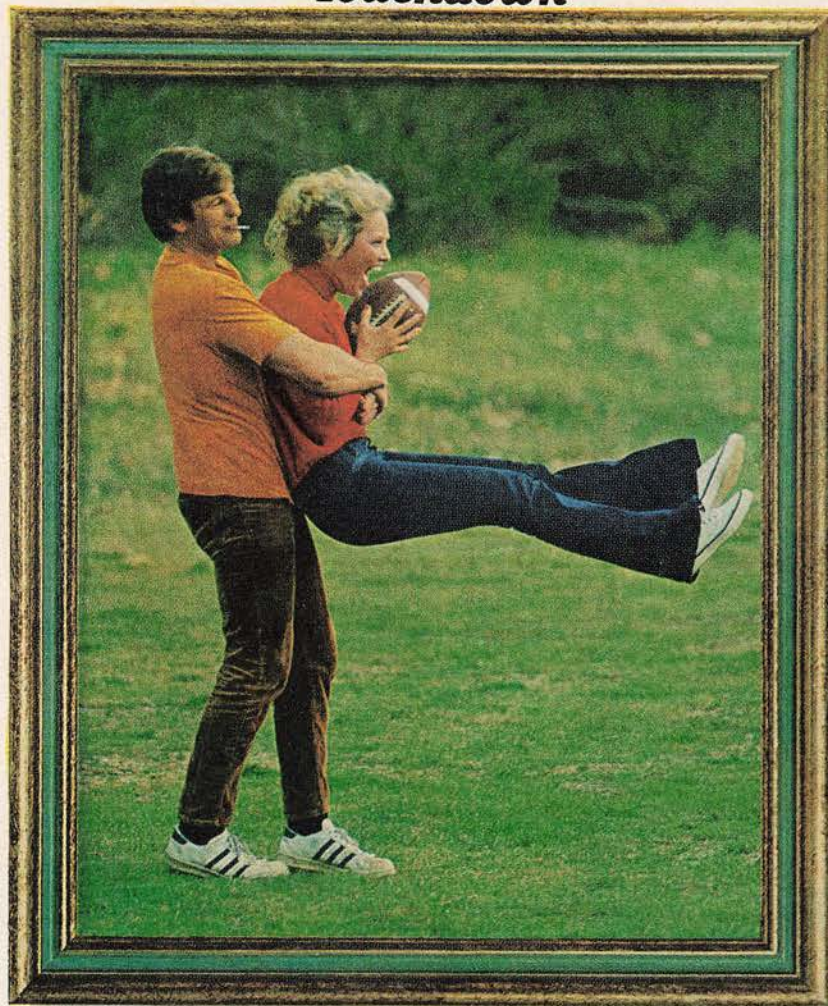
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LETTERS TO SPORT

A GOLD FOR SPORT

I would like to congratulate each writer who wrote an article for your "Special Section: Olympics '72" (September). The articles gave excellent views of some of the athletes competing in Munich, as well as their events. I was truly impressed by Arnold Hano's piece, "What a Gold Medal Means to Me." It really expressed why men and women took both the time and the effort to train for Munich.

Peter Conradi
Ontario, Canada

THE LEAGUE-AL QUESTION

As an American League fan, I disagree with Frank Robinson's statement that the National League is superior ("Frank Robinson Sounds Off! Why the National League Is Different—Better," September). In fact, many people might be surprised to know that in the last 11 World Series, the American League has won five and lost six, while the two leagues split the 64 games evenly.

Frank gave the impression that teams like San Francisco and his Los Angeles Dodgers might be better than teams like Baltimore, Detroit and Oakland. One would only have to look at the records to see that the Dodgers haven't been a consistent contender for anything since the greatest one-man gang of all time, Sandy Koufax, retired in 1966.

R. Ionni
Hershey, Pa.

THE REAL LOLICH

I enjoyed very much September's "SPORT Special" ("Mickey Lolich and the Pride Within"). I felt that the article brought out the real Lolich that not very many people know; the deserving Lolich who has always been overshadowed by flashier teammates.

L. J. Zyra
Schenectady, N.Y.

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LETTERS
TO SPORT

CONTINUED

ISSUE ORIENTED

I think it is incumbent on an old friend to tell you that the September issue of SPORT probably is the best you ever put out. Maybe you have other favorites, but for a real pro job, this was it.

Dave Condon
Sports Columnist
Chicago Tribune

NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND?

You say in your September editorial ("Time Out: The Future of Sports") that "sports humanizes". *Au contraire*, sports today, at least the mass spectator ones, are becoming ever more brutal. In England, deadly riots occur at soccer games. In the USA, I detect little difference between the bloodthirstiness of Sunday pro football crowds and that of the mobs that filled the Roman stadiums 2000 years ago. As for pro hockey, let's face it, the more violence, the more enthusiastic the crowds are. And the economic anarchy of these sports would embarrass even Thomas Hobbes. We see professional jumpers (I do not refer to long and high jumpers) who are unabashedly cynical and avaricious. This is humanizing?

Far more ominous is the decline of baseball and the rise of pro football. The former is a unique product of American democracy. The latter is essentially anti-democratic, a game which expanded in popularity in a parallel line with the militarization of the USA. In brief, the decline of democracy is proportional to the decline of baseball. Conversely, the growth of militarism and imperialistic policies is proportional to the growth of pro football. Thus we have the current administration calling the blockade of North Vietnam "Operation Linebacker." The concentration of power in Pete Rozelle's office parallels the concentration of power in the Pentagon.

R. Raskolnikov
Philadelphia, Pa.

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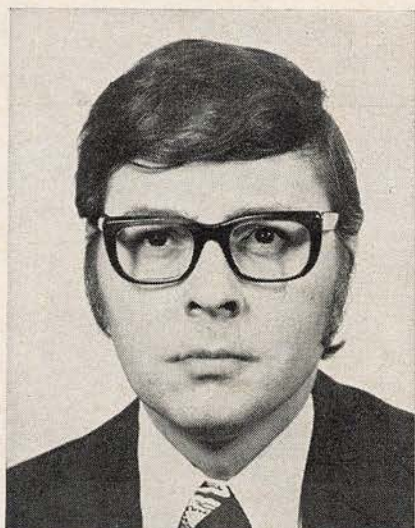
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NOVEMBER THIS MONTH IN SPORT



PHIL MUSICK

Like many sportswriters, Phil Musick is a self-acknowledged "frustrated ex-jock." According to Phil, he was the worst quarterback in the history of Pittsburgh's high school City League. He also ran the mile for the school's track team, and while his best time of 4:40 may not have set any records it was still considered pretty good in the mid-Fifties. After four years in the Air Force, he went to Davis and Elkins College in West Virginia and played baseball.

But by his sophomore year he was married and had to drop out of school "because I ran out of dough." A variety of jobs, including public relations director of a radio station, alleviated the money problems, and Phil resumed his education at Duquesne in Pittsburgh. By virtue of the fact that he graduated as the outstanding journalism student, he had his choice of eight job offers.

He took the best paying one—\$90 a week for the Plainfield Courier News in New Jersey.

The only sport he covered was bowling until he wrote an award-winning piece on softball king Eddie Feigner and was given his own sports column. From there he went on to the Greensburg Tribune Review outside of Pittsburgh, then to his present job at the Pittsburgh Press, where he has a column and "covers everything that moves."

Phil admits that there are disadvantages to his job, mainly the amount of traveling involved; when he goes out of town on a story, that's the time the bugs attack the roses, the basement floods and one of his children falls down the stairs. But on the whole he enjoys being a sportswriter.

So what does a 34-year-old ex-jock do, now that he has a wife, two children, two dogs, a mortgage and a job that he likes? He worries about being out of shape, of course. But while most of us stop short at worrying, Phil decided to do something about it. He began an aerobics exercise program, and in his first attempt at distance running he logged an 11:55 for a mile-and-a-sixteenth.

Not good enough. Now he's down to eight minutes for the mile, and he does the mile-and-a-half in 13:55. He's lost 18 pounds and reports that he's in "half-baked" condition. "I get hung over less now," he explains.

But Phil could be pot-bellied and short-winded as far as we at SPORT are concerned, as long as his brain and fingers get enough exercise typing out stories for us.

Which brings us to his article (on page 70) about Joe Gilliam, the Pittsburgh Steelers' black rookie quarterback. "I had a preconceived notion that Gilliam wouldn't make the team," Phil says. "Then I got involved in the drama of his making it." And that drama is what Phil Musick, sportswriter and ex-jock-getting-back-into-shape, put into his article.

Next month Jimmy Breslin, whose daily exercise is a five-mile walk on the beach, writes about Marquette's Al McGuire, "The Coach Who Couldn't Shoot Straight."

—Norman Lewis Smith

LETTERS TO SPORT

CONTINUED

MERCURY

I would like to congratulate Ray Hill for his article in the September SPORT on Mercury Morris ("In the Shadow of Butch and Sundance"). It was well written and gives Morris the credit he definitely deserves. It's not easy playing under two topnotch running backs such as Larry Csonka and Jim Kiick. However, Mercury is a fine asset to the Miami Dolphins. He is a true NFL all-star.

Kevin Hutson
Torrington, Conn.

HELP FOR THE OVER-PUMMELED?

Having read the article, "Help for the Over-Privileged" ("SPORT Talk," September), I feel that I must reply in defense of Dr. Novich and the fine work he is carrying on. In recent months I have read many articles about his boxing program and have seen one or two television reports about it, and yours is the first negative opinion I have encountered.

From what I have seen in various reputable magazines, I'm led to believe that Dr. Novich is not taking "Sensitive . . . kids, budding artists . . . writers . . . or scientists" and turning them into swaggering bullies, as you lead one to think. I believe he is helping bullied, frightened children at the mercy of older friends or siblings to rely upon themselves, not to run behind mom or dad at every opportunity. I feel your article did Dr. Novich a great disservice.

I, personally, aspire to a career as a writer, yet I like nothing better than to put on my gloves with a friend or relative and go a few rounds. You have slurred a great effort, and, by implication, have disparaged boxing, the greatest sport of all.

Steve Vance
Dalton, Ga.

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DON HUTSON

WHERE ... HAVE YOU GONE?



In 1935, when Don Hutson began his career as an offensive end for the Green Bay Packers, the forward pass wasn't used much more than the "Statue of Liberty" play. You threw the ball only when the old reliable ground game was hopelessly stalled. "When I first started, the pass just wasn't built into the offense," Hutson says. "It was more of a third-down-and-ten play than anything else."

Then in the late Thirties, Sammy Baugh and Sid Luckman came along and things began to change. By the post-war era—with Bob Waterfield, Otto Graham, Bobby Layne and Norm Van Brocklin the premier quarterbacks—the pass came to the forefront as the most devastating weapon.

Hutson, who retired in 1946, missed most of the era of the bomb. Yet he is still the figure that all great receivers since have been measured against. During his years with the Packers he totaled 489 receptions for 8010 yards and 101 touchdowns and he broke 19 NFL records. He did it all with a seemingly effortless style that led him to be

known as the "Ghost of Green Bay." With the help of his accurate place-kicking, he captured the league scoring title five times, and he was named to six NFL All-Star teams.

But that was more than 25 years ago. And in recent years the defense has once again been gaining the upper hand. The swift, smooth world of the wide receiver has been upset. The best today, Otis Taylor (see page 96) recognizes the problem. It's known as the zone. Hutson sees it too. "Wide receivers are becoming valuable decoys and that's all," he asserts. "I think it's a mistake myself. The fans don't want to see a 6-3 game. So I feel that any defense which helps the running game and hurts the passing play is not helping pro football as a whole."

Since '46 Hutson's livelihood has been the automobile business. He owns a Chevrolet-Cadillac franchise in Racine, Wisconsin. He spends his active athletic time on the golf course or out with nature, hunting and fishing. He has three married daughters, three grandchildren and "prospects for many more."

INSIDE FACTS

Although pitching has been the name of the game in recent World Series competition, there have been many outstanding individual hitting performances, some by well-established hitters, and occasionally by comparatively weak-hitting players. . . . Last year, Roberto Clemente (four-time NL batting champ) was the Series hitting star, with a .414 average. . . . In 1970, Paul Blair, a .267-hitter for the Orioles during the regular season, led both clubs in the Series, with .474. . . . In 1969, Al Weis, utility infielder for the Mets during the season, with a .215 average, was the Series batting leader, hitting .455.

In addition to Clemente and Blair, five other active players have hit .400

or better in one Series (playing in all games of that Series), led by Lou Brock, who has performed the feat twice (.414 in 1967 and .464 in 1968). . . . The other active .400 Series hitters have been Tommy Davis (.400 in 1963), Tim McCarver (.478 in 1964), Carl Yastrzemski (.400 in 1967) and Brooks Robinson (.429 in 1970).

Lou Brock's .391 lifetime Series average (for his 21 games in three Series) is the all-time record for players who have appeared in at least 20 Series games. . . . Seven other active players who have been in at least ten Series games have .300 lifetime Series averages—Hank Aaron (.364), Roberto Clemente (.362, with at least one hit in every one of his 14 Series games), Julian Javier (.346), Norm Cash (.333), Jose Pagan (.324), Tim McCarver (.311) and Ron Fairly (.300).

In the 60 World Series games played from 1962 through 1971, a total of 413

runs were scored, an average of just under seven runs per game by both clubs. . . . The composite batting average of the 20 competing clubs in the last ten Series has been only .224, and the overall ERA of the pitchers has been 3.13. . . . Only two of the 20 teams have been able to hit over .260, the Orioles with a .292 average in 1970, and the 1965 Dodgers, with .274. . . . The 1970 Baltimore club had the best run production, averaging 6.6 runs per game against the Cincinnati Reds' pitching staff.

There have been a total of 106 home runs in the last 60 Series games, in the last ten years, 59 by the AL and 47 by the NL. . . . Carl Yastrzemski is the only active player who has three home runs in one Series (1967), and Yastrzemski and his teammate Rico Petrocelli are the only active players who have been able to hit two home runs in one Series game.

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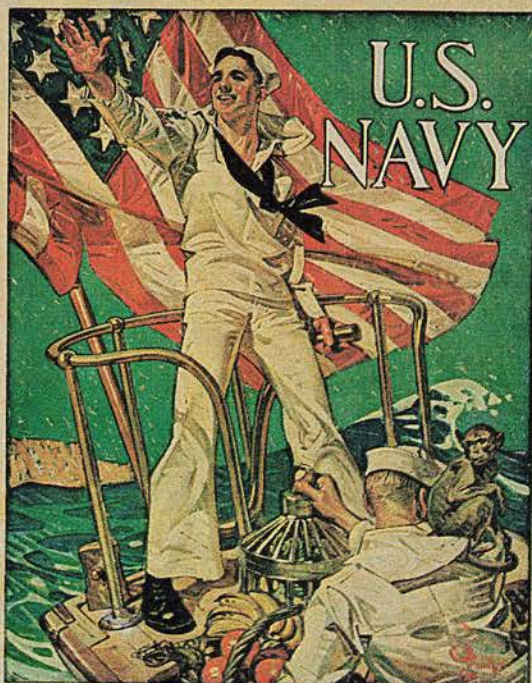


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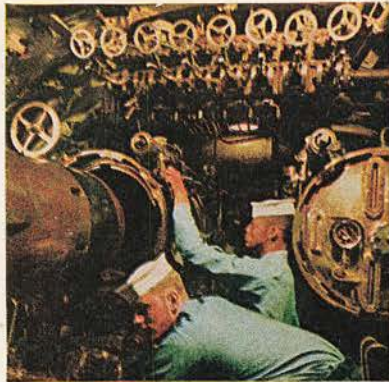
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God and the rest of the top brass, Goldstein's students were fanning around the stadium interviewing partisans of the Navy, the Army—and a handful of neutrals (presumably free-loaders). The aggression meter in use was the Buss-Durkee hostility inventory, whose probing dynamic queries included: "Almost every week I see someone I dislike. . . . I sometimes carry a chip on my shoulder. . . ."

The results? By the end of the game fans had become more hostile, not less. Later Goldstein gave the same test to an audience watching a Walt Disney film—and noted a correspondingly lower hostility index. So he decided that the apologists were wrong. Violence on the football field acts not as an escape valve, but as a catalyst.

Unless, of course, there's some other factor present inciting the crowds. Maybe people who pay to see football games are *inherently* more aggressive than people who pay to see *Bambi*, and therefore get angrier when—at a crucial moment of the game—an interviewer shoves a list of questions in front of their faces.

WHITE MAGIC

"When I was a kid back in Middletown, Ohio," says New York Knick star Jerry Lucas, "I became bored with the normal routine—riding in autos, riding my bike, walking to school. By the time I was nine years old, I had started to develop mental games of my own. I started memorizing things. Like how many steps there were in a flight of stairs, or how many paint stripes there were to a mile of highway, how many fence posts there were in this field or that field."

Human calculators are rare but not unknown. Surprisingly enough the condition is often associated with mental or physical drawbacks.

However, Lucas earned entrance into the exclusive academic ranks of Phi Beta Kappa while attending Ohio State University. In fact, his only visible abnormality—outside of his penchant for numbers—is 6-8 height, but he's turned that to advantage in the NBA.

Unlike some of his predecessors, this PR oriented calculator is about to use his talent for profit this month on the

three-hour children's magic special he has prepared for ABC television.

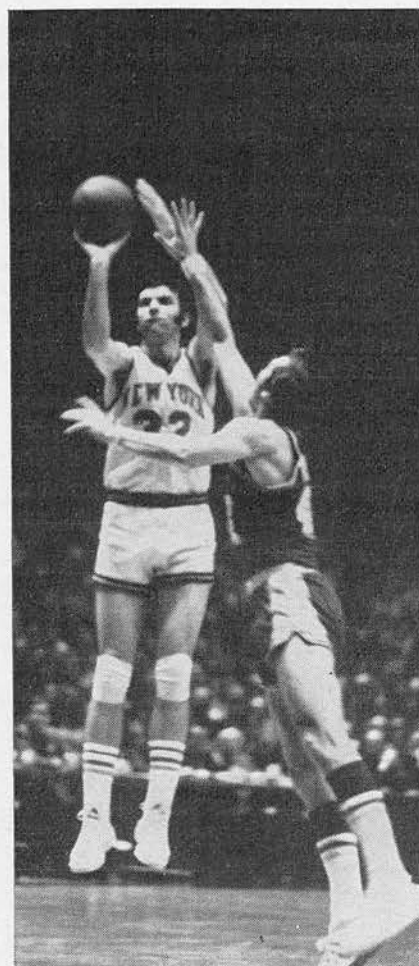
"Over the last 20 years I've made a thorough study of magic, illusion and the use of alphabetical and numerical systems," Lucas says. "Right now I can do more than 100 tricks with cards."

Jerry has memorized the first five-hundred pages of the Manhattan telephone book. He's memorized all of *The Godfather*. If the children's special is a success, Jerry hopes ABC will give him a regular series with which to mesmerize the small fry.

"Magic is fun for everyone," he says, "but especially for children. It can be educational. There are hundreds of games involving letters, words and numbers that I can teach them to help expand their mental abilities. Learning doesn't have to be dull."

SAKI TO 'EM

The Japanese, those imitative geniuses,



are at it again. First they adopted baseball as their national game. Then they started producing some of the world's premier slalom skiers. Recently the Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. extended a personal invitation to Bobby Orr; Japanese ice hockey, he said, could benefit immensely from on-the-spot clinics conducted by the Bruins' star defenseman.

Japanese ice hockey?

Why not? They're already playing American baseball, basketball—and football. Last year Utah State met an All-Japan football squad in a game played in the National Stadium in Tokyo. It wasn't the first time that American and Japanese elevens had met. In 1935 a visiting Pacific Coast University All-Star team defeated Meiji University, 71-7, and an All-Japan team, 46-0. In fact, it turns out that many Japanese universities have American style football teams, although the sport hasn't developed a wide following among the general public.

At least not yet.

In last year's meeting, Utah State (8-3 in regular season U.S. play) won 50-6, which demonstrates that the Japanese still have a long way to go before, say, the Dallas Cowboys can make a post-season tour like the Baltimore Orioles' tour in 1971.

"Our kids were impressed with how well they played and how hard they hit," said Utah State coach Chuck Mills. "But physically we were so much bigger. There was no way they could control our kids. Still," he adds, "I think it would be a good idea for an American university team to come to Japan once every three years. It not only would help to stimulate interest in American football, but would also give the Japanese teams a chance to find out their improvement and their level of play."

And doubtless the best team to send would be the team among major colleges with the worst record. For though Utah State is not one of the bigger teams in our nation, they still enjoyed a 50-pound weight advantage and a one-foot height advantage per player over their Japanese rivals.

How's that for an ego-builder???

The Knicks will need magic oncourt from Jerry Lucas to finish ahead of Boston.

The new Remington Comfort Head. Until now, a shave this close could really hurt.

You've heard a lot of talk about The Great Close Shave.

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The new Comfort Head.

For one thing, while our new comfort head has more slot openings to trap your beard, they're a lot smaller, so there's less chance of trapping your skin.

For another thing, there's a new smooth "v" groove between our slot rows. So there are no rough edges to scrape your face.

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The new Remington also has super sharp blades to cut whiskers clean and prevent pull and drag.

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We back them better because we build them better.

CONDITIONS AND COMMENTS

Dana Lewis (property of the Philadelphia 76ers, but currently playing with the Hartford Caps of the Eastern League) explaining the pressure tactics used by Oral Roberts University to keep him from breaking his scholarship and going to the U. of Tulsa: "When they heard I was thinking of leaving, one of the vice presidents got in touch with my mother (who is very religious). He said he'd just talked with the Lord and that He'd said it was His will that I stay at Oral Roberts."

KNIGHT DODGES ROOK

"Spassky is a fifth-grade level player, and I could take any kid off the streets and train him in five years to beat Fischer."

Bobby Fischer hadn't even finalized his victory over the Russian grandmaster when a new gun in town was calling for High Noon on 64 squares. Was it the great Emmanuel Lasker himself—

Is Bobby Fischer ordering one from Column A or reading Spassky's chess book?

come out of retirement to mine the vein of gold Fischer had struck? Would ex-champion Petrosian be so foolhardy? Had Fidel ordered the Cuban genius Capablanca to demonstrate unparalleled patriotism by returning from beyond the grave to recapture the chess crown for Communism?

No, friends. The strident voice issued not from the far side of the grave—nor even of the Atlantic. It originated in the testy larynx of one Leonard O. Shinew. Mr. Shinew sent a telegram to Messrs. Fischer and Spassky, challenging the winner, with the proviso:

"In the event you are unable to defeat your present opponent, consider our offer withdrawn."

You see—why should the checkers champion of planet Earth settle for second best?

Of course, although it hurts, we should begin by qualifying Mr. Shinew's title. He won it in a plebiscite and it's only fair to note that there was only one qualified voter—Leonard O. Shinew.

Never mind. The road to heaven is paved with bad intentions. And Mr.

Shinew's avowed aim is not only to garner some publicity, but to raise the public tolerance of checkers. But while Bobby Fischer made the public aware of chess by bragging he could beat the best in the world, then proving it, all Mr. Shinew has done to justify his bragging is to defeat 21 members of the Lakeshore (Georgia) High School varsity football team.

But the caliber of his competitors, says Shinew, lowers the validity of his claim not one bit. In fact, playing football players symbolized the difference between chess and checkers.

"In chess," he argues, "you take an opponent's bishop and he sits ten minutes to figure out what you're doing. You aren't doing anything! In checkers, you charge right out and attack!"

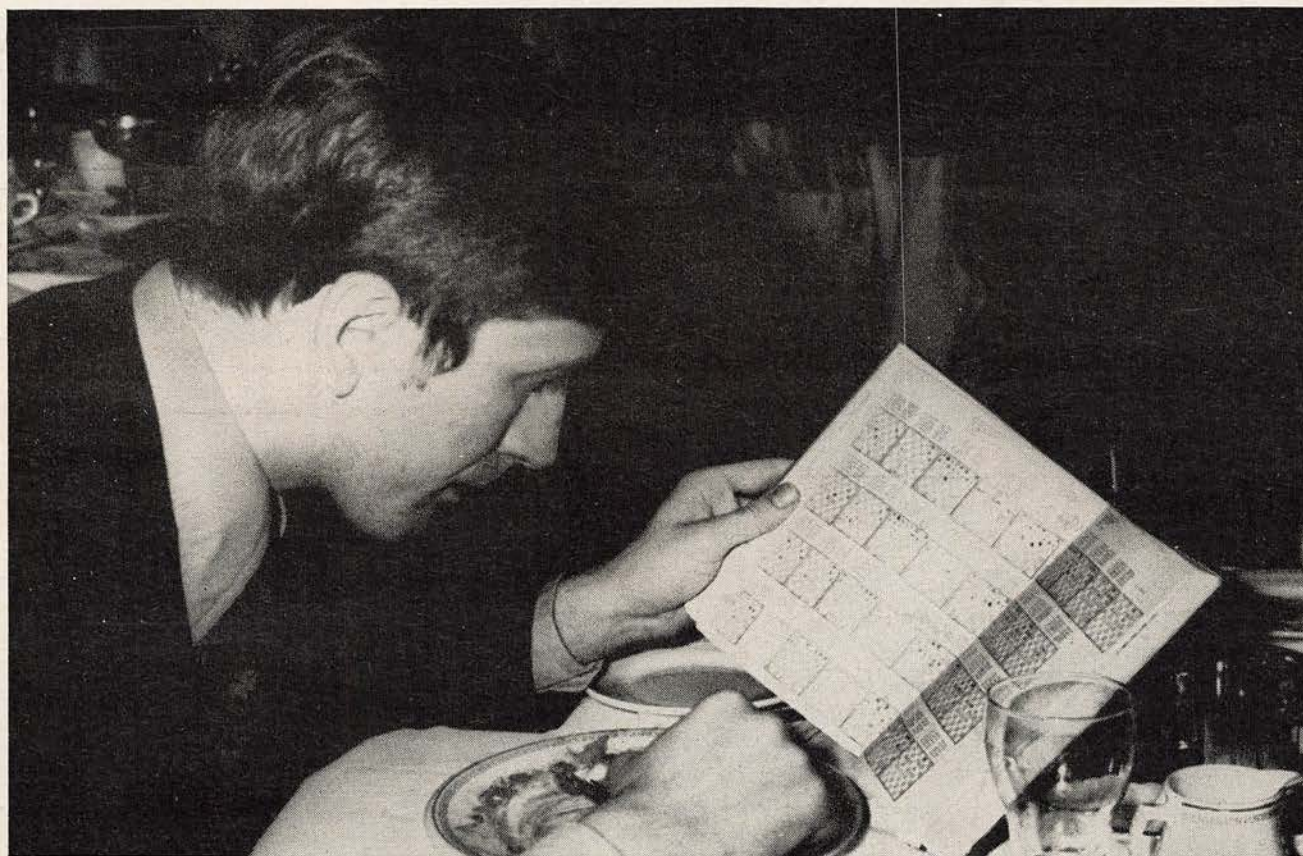
Needless to say, Bobby ignored Mr. Shinew's challenge.

Out of fear?

After all, Shinew is a graduate of Bowling Green University.

Bobby never even finished high school.

And we know how much Bobby respects a college education.



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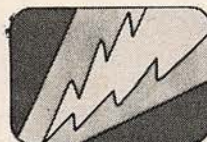
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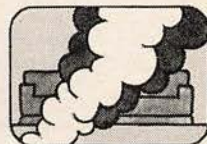
Personal liability



Hail



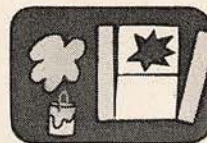
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GRADE YOURSELF

15-16 EXCELLENT
13-14 VERY GOOD
11-12 FAIR

1. He was the first catcher to be named the National League's Rookie-of-the-Year.

- a. Johnny Bench
- b. Roy Campanella
- c. Randy Hundley

2. He was the first catcher to be named the American League's Rookie-of-the-Year.

- a. Elston Howard
- b. Thurman Munson
- c. Bill Freehan

3. Who is the leading career rusher in Notre Dame football history?

- a. Nick Eddy
- b. Marchy Schwartz
- c. George Gipp

4. Match the actor with the athlete he portrayed in a film.

Gary Cooper Babe Ruth

William Bendix Lou Gehrig
James Caan George Gipp
Ronald Reagan Brian Piccolo

5. What player has made the most free throws (28) in one National Basketball Association game?

- a. Frank Selvy
- b. Oscar Robertson
- c. Wilt Chamberlain

6. True or False: Through last season, Sonny Jurgensen was the leading passer in National Football League history.

7. Who holds the National Hockey League record for most consecutive games played?



- a. Alex Delvecchio
- b. Glenn Hall
- c. Andy Hebenton

8. Who was the American Basketball Association's first MVP?

- a. Mel Daniels
- b. Rick Barry
- c. Connie Hawkins

9. Which conference led the National Collegiate Athletic Association in average rushing yardage per game last season?

- a. Big Eight
- b. Ivy League
- c. Pacific Eight

10. This team won the first ABA championship, in 1968.

- a. Pittsburgh Pipers
- b. New Orleans Bucs
- c. Indiana Pacers

11. This team won the first NBA championship, in 1947.

- a. Philadelphia Warriors
- b. New York Knicks
- c. Washington Capitols

12. True or False: Bobby Hull holds the NHL career record for most hat tricks (three or more goals in one game).

13. How many NFL running backs gained at least 1000 yards rushing last season?

- a. Four
- b. Two
- c. Five
- d. Three

14. How many NFL players scored at least 100 points last season?

- a. Four
- b. Two
- c. Five
- d. Three

15. Who holds the NHL record for most penalty minutes accumulated in one season?

- a. Howie Young
- b. Keith Magnuson
- c. Ted Lindsay

16. This team is the only member of the old American Football League never to have participated in a playoff game, either before or after the merger.

- a. Houston Oilers
- b. New England Patriots
- c. Denver Broncos

FOR ANSWERS TURN TO PAGE 130



Schick's done something for the double edge man.
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You're a double edge man. And very loyal.
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The kind of shave a double edge man ought to try.

The new Schick Super II. It puts both edges on your side.

Schick Super II



SPORT TALK

BY DON KOWET

GRIDIRON AGGRO

Ron the Reaper's stropping his bowie knife on his teeth. . . .

Karate Kim is smashing a plaster-of-paris replica of Ron the Reaper. . . .

And they're on collision course. Ron holds a maniacal conviction that the New York Giants are the greatest thing in helmets since Hitler's Storm Troopers. Karate Kim is equally adamant that the Giants wear their athletic supporters backwards. In fact, Kim's preference is for Joe Namath, who, Kim says, executes better than anyone since the Spanish Grand Inquisitor, Torquemada.

Now, let's pretend the Giants are scheduled to play the Jets.

Let's pretend that Ron and Kim run into each other *after* the game.

Will it be fistfight or friendship?

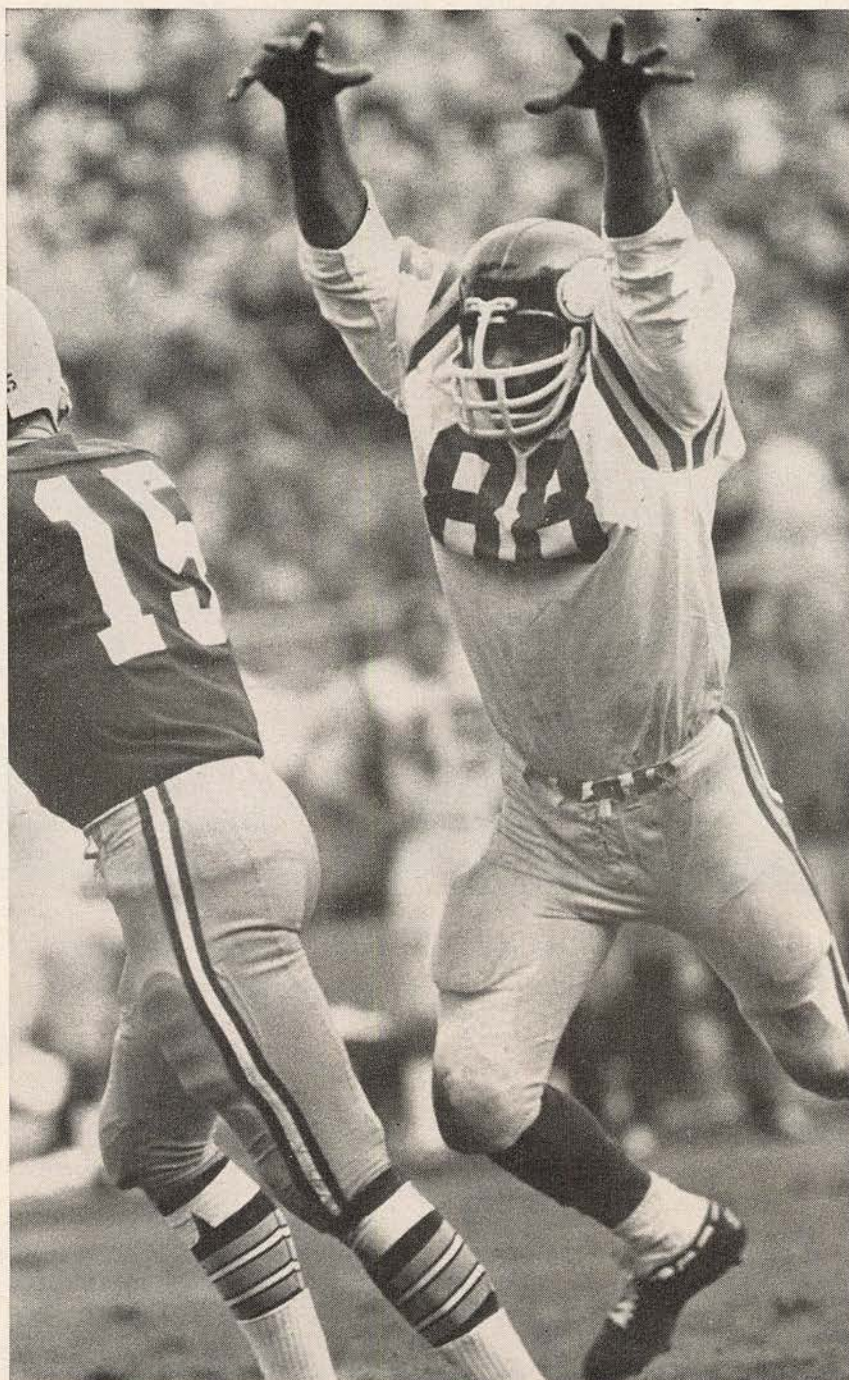
"It has always been assumed that by watching a violent sport the spectator vicariously rids himself of his aggressions," says Dr. Jeffrey Goldstein, professor of psychology at Temple University. "But our studies disagree. The writers who made these claims, people like Freud and Lorenz, never did any research."

Goldstein took it upon himself to rectify their breach of empirical etiquette. Corraling a team of Temple students, Goldstein sallied out of the laboratory to test the claims of Sigmund Freud and Konrad Lorenz in the crucible of an emotional sports contest.

"The Army-Navy game," he says, "presents a fair sample of crowd behavior. It's a critical game for the people who attend it, and because the game is played on neutral territory, there is an equal distribution of winning and losing fans."

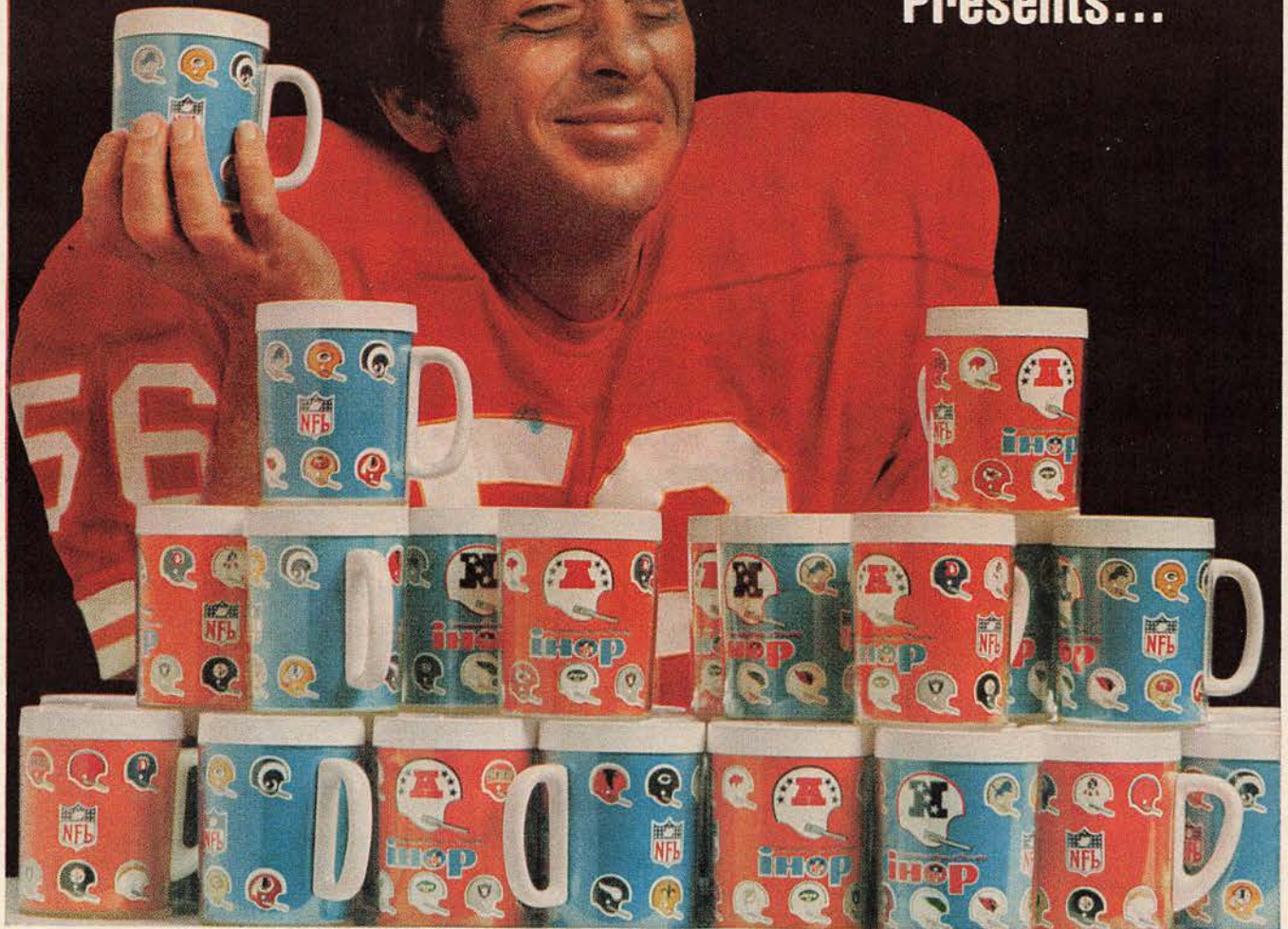
So while the Middies and Cadets stuck fingers in each others' eyes for

(Continued on page 20)



Viking Alan Page—here leaping toward ex-Packer Bart Starr—radiates hostility.

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PAUL HEMPHILL'S AMERICA



When I was a kid, literally growing up in the cheap seats at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama, I had a weird fascination for baseball parks. Other guys went for pinups of Rita Hayworth or the chrome on a '48 Ford, but my fetish was the ballpark with its own peculiar shapes and distances. I had memorized the dimensions of every major-league park from the pages of the *Baseball Register* and the *Sporting News*, even had the exact profile of each grandstand clearly in my mind, and spent a part of my youth reproducing them. Instead of constructing "toadstools" in the sand, I carefully shaped models of Yankee Stadium on the beach. In trigonometry class I used my compass and protractor to lay out Wrigley Field. In my room I once built a replica of the Polo Grounds from poster paper and kitchen matches.

My all-time favorite ballpark was a place called Sulphur Dell, home of the Southern Association's Nashville Vols. "Suffer Hell," as rival pitchers called it, cowered in the bottom of an old sulphur pit and was a haven for pull-hitting left-handers. A steep incline ran from the back edge of the infield to the rightfield fence, a mere 257 feet from home plate, and atop the fence was a towering chicken-wire screen. Line drives slammed into the fence before they could take off (the second baseman always played the carom), but high pop flies were home runs. Few righthanded pitchers ever won at Sulphur Dell, and many an outfielder nearly broke his neck clambering up and down "Goat Hill." Predictably, the Vols were always loaded with pot-bellied upper-cutting lefties who hit .430 at home and .196 on the road.

All of this knowledge had come from the mouth of a sportscaster named

Gabby Bell, who did imaginative ticker-tape recreations of Birmingham Baron road games, and I never fully believed what I had been told until I saw the Dell myself. Passing through Nashville just before a doubleheader one Sunday, my parents stopped long enough for me to beg an usher to let me in just for a look. "Gah-lee," is all I could say. Gabby had been too kind. I next sculpted a clay model of Sulphur Dell, which none of my pals believed, and the last I heard the old place was being used to store new cars following a short career as a naturally-banked stock car track.

Few of the old ballparks are around anymore, of course. When the minor leagues expired and there was no longer a need for a baseball park in, say, Newark, they called in bulldozers and built shopping centers or used-car lots. Nor are many of the original major-league parks—those which housed the 16 major-league clubs of the late Forties—still in use. Of the two dozen clubs in the majors today, only six are playing in parks that were being used 25 years ago. In some cases, those clubs moved to new cities that required new stadiums (Braves, Giants, Dodgers, *et al*); and in other cases, there was expansion (Houston, Atlanta, California, *et al*). But several more of the traditional old parks like Crosley in Cincinnati and Forbes in Pittsburgh have been discarded recently because, simply, it was felt they were not keeping up with progress in America.

And so we have been presented with the shiny new multi-purpose sports stadium, built for baseball and football and soccer and the Shrine Circus and the Boy Scout Jamboree alike. They are domed and air conditioned, in the

case of the Astrodome (not forgetting the motel-room boxes where fat cats can watch it all on television). Elevators. Seats a mile high. Grassed infields. Artificial grass. Shining symbols of progress.

But here from my position high above Atlanta Stadium I hate the new places. I have come out here for a lot of events—the Braves, the Falcons, the soccer Chiefs, the Beatles—and I can't say I have fully enjoyed a single one of them. You are too far away, for one thing. These new places weren't built for baseball and they weren't built for football; they were built to hold a lot of people. "Jesus," said Detroit's Norm Cash when he stepped onto the field for an exhibition game and saw the broad stretches of foul territory at Atlanta Stadium, "there goes 15 points off the batting averages."

Here I go again, getting all wrought-up and sentimental about baseball, but I can't help it. I feel the same way about what they will soon do to the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, the old tabernacle that is so ugly and sweaty it is beautiful: Tear it down; replace it with a big air-conditioned auditorium; talk about "progress." The Opry won't be the same at "Opryland U.S.A.," just as baseball won't be the same when they level Yankee Stadium and Wrigley Field and Fenway Park and the rest of them. And they will, sooner or later.

So we are left with our memories, once more. Furillo playing shots off the banked rightfield wall at Ebbets Field. Willie Mays covering the North Forty at the Polo Grounds. The bank in left at Crosley. And, for me, at least, another footnote from the minors. My only professional game was played as a second baseman at little Graceville, Florida, the smallest team ever in pro ball. The outfield light poles were dangerously stacked inside the fences. Late in the game a high hooking shot was hit down the leftfield line and our leftfielder turned to take off after it, disappearing into the darkness, grunting and chugging, straining to see the ball in the night. Finally, a terrifying clatter as he slammed into the tin fence, and an entire team going out to check on him. At the very least, the little park had its distinguishing characteristics.

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SONY. Ask anyone.



THE DESERT PLAYS DIRTY

Mickey Thompson Tackles The Baja 1000

Moments before the green flag was to signal the start of a most unusual motor race a few years ago, the starter raised his left arm, pointed to his wrist watch, and said: "Gentlemen, set your watches back 60 years."

His remark not only relieved the pre-race tensions building up among the drivers and co-drivers, but it pretty well described the condition of the "race" course.

The location was Ensenada, Mexico, and the race was the second annual Mexican 1000 in 1968—a headlong plunge of nearly 300 cars and motorcycles down the rugged Baja California peninsula.

One of the observers at the dawn scene was Mickey Thompson, world-famous speedking who had wrestled Salt Bears on the Bonneville Salt Flats at 400 mph but had never driven in an off-road race.

The role of spectator was gnawing at him ferociously that morning. So fiercely, in fact, that he desperately tried to buy a race car—"any car"—right up to the time the green flag was dropped.

"I couldn't stand not being in there," he said later. "I just had to try it."

So intent was Mickey to be involved that he flew his own plane ahead to each check point, hoping still to talk his way into a machine. But that didn't work either. The

best he could do was help distressed drivers along the way. And there were many. The terrain was terrible.

One writer described the land, which dangles for nearly 1000 miles below the California border, this way:

"It's nothing but poor shrubs, useless thorny bushes, bare rocks, piles of stone and sand . . . without water or wood."

The description was penned by Johan Jakob Baegert, a Jesuit missionary from Germany who covered the very same ground by burro between 1751 and 1768. In the meantime, very little of the land has changed. Even the burro remains as an important means of transportation.

Half of the '68 field never made it to the destination, La Paz. They left a grim trail—an 850-mile junkyard, littered with broken vehicles, a few broken bones and several stranded drivers. It was a story of blown tires, smashed cars and discouragement.

But those elements only heightened the fascination for Thompson, who had named his first 400 mph Bonneville car Challenger I. He thrives on challenges.

"I'll be there next year," he vowed in 1968. And he was.

Now, four years later, Thompson is considered one of Baja's veter-

ans. He's competed in three 1000s and three of the younger Baja 500s—a race which is shorter and rougher, starting and finishing in Ensenada.

The challenge, though, hasn't changed for him. He hasn't won yet.

Thompson has come close ever since he switched to his own equipment, Chevrolet pick-up trucks.

For example, in last June's Baja 500, Thompson finished only 41 minutes behind overall winner Bob Ferro, a California dune buggy driver in what was considered a remarkable performance for a pick-up truck in a race more suited to buggies.

During the first two legs on that run, Thompson and Parnelli Jones, the 1963 Indianapolis 500 winner who now confines all of his racing activities to the off-road variety, waged a fierce duel.

"We covered the first leg in exactly the same time," Thompson recalled. Thompson and Jones averaged 100 mph over a twisting, mountainous portion of the course which is paved.

"And we had the same time on the second leg," Thompson continued. "It was a helluva battle."

But it came apart. Both drivers encountered trouble and the duel dissolved. Thompson did manage to "hang in" to finish the 554 miles in 11 hours, 37 minutes, including



DESERT

CONTINUED

the 47 minutes lost for repairs to his ignition system.

Thompson actually started out his Baja competition on the same Bill Stroppe Ford team with Jones in 1969. "I was the last driver to join the team," he said. "So I got the leftovers."

After three races, Thompson decided to get his own car. He chose a Chevrolet.

"I don't get paid for driving anymore . . . in fact, it costs me about \$50,000 to go off-road racing," Thompson continued, "but now I'm preparing the equipment myself for myself."

Why did he turn to a stock, 5000-pound truck to race against lighter, off-road vehicles built specifically for racing?

"Because it relates," Thompson explained. "My sponsors like it for that reason."

Thompson gets help in his racing program from such companies as Valvoline, Purolator, Peter Paul Candies, RAC Instruments and Holley Carbs.

"The big thing now is off-road activity, recreation vehicles," Thompson added. "A pick-up relates to things people are interested in now. So it seems more meaningful. Besides, they're going to sell more than a million trucks this year."

Thompson prepares his Baja vehicles in a race shop he operates in Long Beach, California. At 43, he is comfortably settled. He owns a tire manufacturing company, has large real estate holdings, a piece of a motorcycle company, sits on the board of directors of four companies in the automotive supply field and has hotel, oil, timber and gold mine interests in Ecuador and Australia.

The competitive spirit of a man who holds some 485 national and world land speed records hasn't

waned and must be satisfied. That's where the Chevrolet pick-up truck enters his life.

He admits he asks it to do quite a lot.

"I can't believe how fast you can fly in these off-road races," Thompson said. "Our top speed is 140 mph. Looking at movies of the last race, scared me to death. The truck is sideways more than anything else."

Thompson estimates his truck is at least a ton heavier than Parnelli Jones' racer in its fiberglass Bronco skin.

"Most of it is the original truck," he said, pointing to a stripped down 1973 Chevy pickup in the center of his shop. He estimated that 1000 man hours go into its preparation for competition.

"We 'blueprint' the engine for maximum efficiency," he said. The powerplant is a stock 350-cubic inch V-8 engine which Thompson claims will produce in excess of 400 horsepower. It is coupled with the standard automatic transmission. "There's a tremendous advantage in not having to shift all of the time," he says.

Thompson installs heavy duty equipment, including triple shock absorbers on the four corners and standard Chevrolet disc brakes on all four wheels.

Tires are a make-or-break issue, according to Thompson. "I use big 35-inch tires rather than the 30-inch tires used by most of the other drivers. I think they 'eat' rocks better."

He doesn't change tires for the pavement although he admits the big tires result in a higher center of gravity "and make the car feel like it wants to tip over."

Other changes include installation of a roll bar and an over-sized (50 gallon) gas tank to minimize the number of pit stops.

Thompson says he loves to prepare a car for off-road racing because "you can use some engineering know-how without having somebody barring your car."

Sometimes the Baja practice runs have been even more eventful for

Thompson than the races themselves. "That's when we can determine what will break and what won't, and just how hard we dare push," Thompson said. "Three times I've had to walk out of situations where I was stranded. Usually, in these cases, I hitch a ride back to get parts, then fly back and retrieve the truck."

That's the way it works sometimes.

There was that practice run two years ago, for instance, when Mickey broke down in the high country of the peninsula's northern portion. He was traveling from San Felipe on the Gulf of California side to Ensenada on the Pacific Coast. He tried to walk out, but got lost.

"I like to froze to death," he recalled. "It was cold and the wind was fierce. I crawled into a 50-gallon drum and covered it with hay, trying to get warm. I had a little bottle of water which I used as a pillow. Well, the water in the bottle froze. That's how cold it was."

Thompson finally did walk out of this particular dilemma—40 miles and 22 hours later.

While he still hasn't won a race in Mexico, Thompson does have one class victory in the book with his half-ton Chevrolet pick-up truck. He captured the first Parker Dam 500 earlier this year, somehow surviving a murderous mountain and desert course which penetrated into both California and Arizona. The victory, though, was incomplete, he felt. Parnelli Jones and the Stroppe team didn't compete, pulling out due to the condition of the course.

And who sits next to Thompson in the co-driver's seat as they thrash back in time over the rugged landscape of Baja California?

"My son, 22-year-old Danny," answered Mickey. "He's a motocross rider and the best co-driver I've ever had."

Like previous co-drivers for Thompson, Danny doesn't get a chance to do any of the driving.

"I do it all," explained Mickey. "I'm just too scared to ride with anybody else."

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AC SPARK PLUG DIVISION

OUT OF THE BUTTERFLY NET



BY VIC ZIEGEL



Once upon a time, although that isn't exactly when it happened, there was a parrot who wanted to play for the Washington Redskins. It all began at the Redskins' preseason camp. Coach George Allen was sitting in his office when the trainer knocked on the door. . . .

"George, there's a parrot in the locker room who wants to talk to you."

"I must be working too hard, Doc. I thought I heard you say a parrot wanted to talk to me. Maybe I'm spending too much time worrying about camp security but I'm convinced my phone is tapped. I've decided to cross them up by dialing only wrong numbers."

"Can you make any trades doing that?"

"Sure. I was after a linebacker on the Jets and I knew I couldn't call them so I dialed the New York area code and then the first seven numbers I could think of. A six-year-old girl in Brooklyn answered the telephone. She said her mother was out umpiring a baseball game but that she would be glad to trade me a linebacker."

"What did you have to give her?"

"I told her I'd think of something nice. Maybe I'll give her a women's liberation doll. That's a doll that comes all wound up. Listen, I think we better tell the sportswriters it was a high draft choice. Do I have any second-round draft choices left?"

"You don't, George, but your grandchildren might. George, how much longer are you going to keep this parrot waiting. He's starting to curse. I left him standing in the hallway."

"Standing? Why isn't he flying? Is he hurt? Is it a knee? A beak? A wing?"

Suddenly, the parrot walked into the room. "Mr. Allen," the parrot said, "I'd like to speak to you."

"Sorry, I'm too busy. I won't even believe I gave you this much time until I look at the films. Why don't you talk to our vice-president in charge of mascots. We may not be using Redskins much longer."

"I'm not interested in being a mascot. I want to help you at quarterback."

"You must be kidding. I've already got two quarterbacks, Bill Kilmer and what's-his-name. I won't carry a third one. Why don't you stick to something you know how to do. How would you like me to find you a nice cracker?"

"I don't eat crackers."

"You don't eat crackers and you don't fly. Beautiful. I'll bet you read *Treasure Island* and hated Long John Silver. Why is it everybody sends me their weirdos?"

"Mr. Allen, I'm offering you a chance to have a quarterback who will always call the plays you'd like him to call."

"There ain't no such bird."

"Listen to me. I don't expect you to drop your regular quarterbacks. Keep them and use me too. What I'll do is perch on the quarterback's shoulder and tell him what play you want."

"How will you know what I want?"

"Because immediately after every down I'll fly to you, get the play, fly back to the huddle and tell it to the quarterback. There's nothing in the NFL rules that says I can't do that and they can't call me an extra man because I'm a parrot."

"Let me think about this for a second. How do I know you won't get emotional and call a play on your own? How do I know my trainer isn't a ventriliquist? If we win the first few games you'll probably want to wear white shoes. Why didn't you see Tom Landry first? You must know he'd have more use for you at Dallas."

"I did go to Landry. He told me it was an interesting idea and to come back when I found another parrot I could shuttle with."

"I don't know, it sounds pretty risky. We play the Eagles twice and they could eat you up. But suppose I say I'm interested. When can you start learning our plays?"

"Immediately. Let me just call my mother and tell her I'm being signed. It isn't every day that the youngest member of a parrot family has such a great opportunity."

"How young are you?"

"Two years old."

"Two! I thought parrots lived to be a 100."

"Some of them make it and if the offensive line holds I might too."

"Not here you won't. Haven't you heard? I only play veterans. Don't you read the newspapers in the bottom of your cage? Two years old! Why, they'd laugh me out of the league. Look, maybe we can use you in 60 or 70 years."

"But what will I do until then? Where will I live?"

"Hold on a minute while I call a little girl who's about your age. Oh, heck, I hope there aren't too many telephones in Brooklyn."

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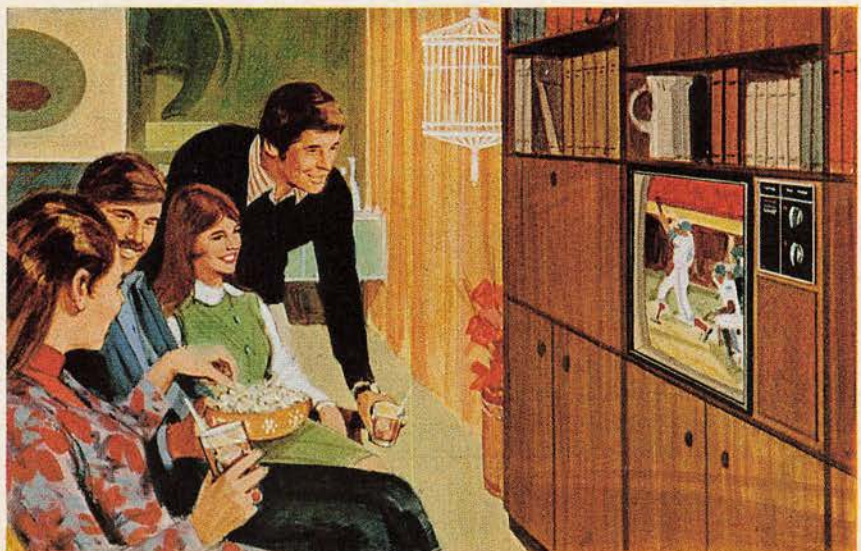
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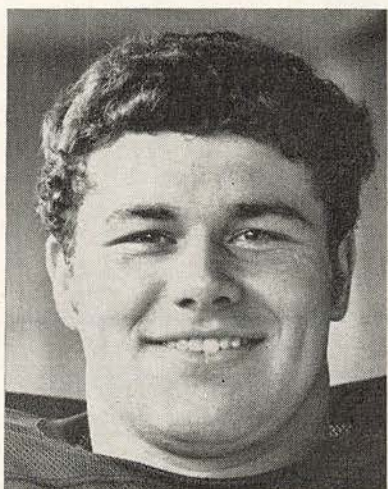
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COLLEGE ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



**BOB POSS,
INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Bob Poss grew up in a suburb of Washington, D.C. where one-family houses were linked by empty lots and there was extra cash for shoulder-pads and catchers' mitts. So he played linebacker and tackle for the Duval High School football team. He was the starting pitcher on the school's baseball team. "In high school my thoughts never really went past athletics," he admits. "I was on the 'spur' committees that set class activities, but don't make a big thing out of that, 'cause it was nothing."

It wasn't until his junior year at Indiana State that Bob stumbled out of the womb of the locker room into the glare of a problematic world. The previous year he had won ISU's "Hatchet Award" as the offensive lineman with the best blocking percentage. He had led the team in downfield tackles. In 1971 the six-foot, 206-pound guard would receive Honorable Mention on the Associated Press College Division All-America team. He would be named captain of the varsity football team in 1972.

But despite his success on the gridiron, as a junior Bob felt something was missing. He couldn't put his finger on it. It was intangible. The lack was . . . well . . . *spiritual*.

And then one day he was walking through ISU's arena. "I saw a sign up that said 'FCA meeting on Thursday,'" he

recalls. "That was the only night we didn't have a meeting of the football team, and I was just so conditioned to going to meetings that I sort of headed there on automatic pilot. I wasn't really interested in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes."

The meeting scheduled that night turned out to be the spore of an FCA chapter at ISU. And Bob Poss returned on the Thursdays that followed to become the chapter's first president. His inaugural project was to set up a "little brother" program. Bob's "little brother" is a 15-year-old black kid named Bernie, from the Terre Haute ghetto.

"His father left home four or five years ago," Bob says. "His mother—she's a really good mother, she cares about him—she just couldn't supply the need he has for a father. She has to work. She has a lot of kids. They're poor."

Bob's first meeting with his "little brother" left an indelible memory. His do-gooder dream had catapulted him into the heart of a different country—a state within a state called the ghetto. "It helped that my roommate, who's ISU's quarterback, was assigned Bernie's brother," Bob says. "So after we went to the kids' home for the first time, we could go back to campus and discuss how we were going to get through to them."

"I found it difficult, at first," he adds. "Not because of race, or the difference in life-style—although that was part of it. But mainly because of age. I had never really worked with kids before. I'm still only 22, my 'little brother' is 15. How do I act? Should I be his buddy? Should I be his leader? I had to find some kind of model—and it turned out to try to be both guide and friend. Be a friend, but one who could also set an example."

Again this year Bob and his roommate spent as much free time as they could muster with their "little brothers." They took them swimming, to their fraternity house, to local fairs where the kids could munch hot dogs and hamburgers while watching the daredevil cyclists and the auctions. They coached their little brothers in sports. Bob and his roommate spent hours deciphering the mysteries of junior high school algebra. "The advantage of my roommate having a 'little brother' in the same family is that when one of us is busy, the other one can go down and take out both kids," Bob says. "Right now," he adds, "my plans are to work for my Master's degree here in physical education, so I'll be able to keep on seeing Bernie for the next couple of years. By the time I get my graduate degree, he'll be 17, 18—graduating from high school. And he'll be old enough so that there won't be a leadership factor involved anymore. We'll just be plain friends."

Bob also participated in an on-campus sports clinic for mentally retarded kids. "I think that the only thing we can say that these kids got out of the program was that they had a good time for a few days out of their lives," Bob says. "But that's achieving something. One month later some of these kids might not even remember what they did here—running pass patterns, learning to catch a football. But they'll remember that they had a good time."

Quite a change from the suburban D.C. kid whose high school awareness was circumscribed by spur committees, fastballs and headbreaking.

DON KOWET



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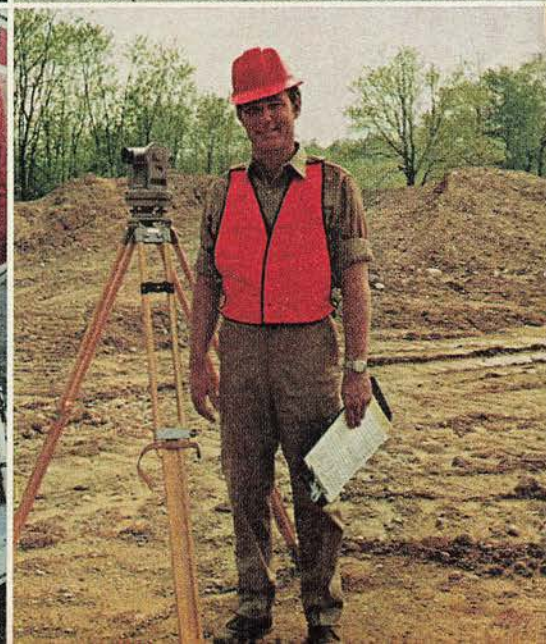
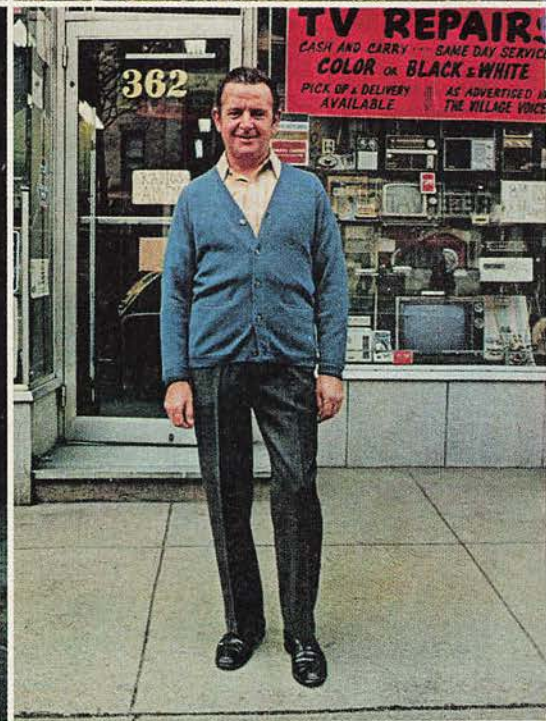
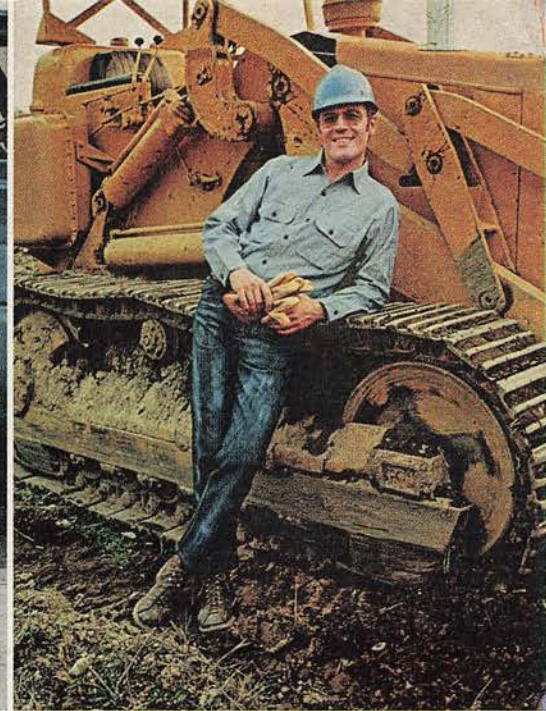
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(Continued from page 77)

was gone—traded to Detroit for Dennis Gaubatz. And while the Lions' coach Harry Gilmer was explaining, "I believe that with his rookie year behind him, things will straighten out. I don't believe he will be a problem," the Colts were relating a few Looney stories they had held back until then.

There were the stories that John Unitas told—about the time Joe Don asked someone to "watch my cheeseburger for me," while a team meeting was going on; about the time the team was gathered in the locker room for the pregame prayer, and someone heard a noise in the equipment room, and there was Looney, listening to the radio and doing the Mashed Potato all by himself; about the time in practice when Joe Don got off a 60-yard skyscraper of a punt and stood there watching it, hands on hips, and finally asked, "How'd you like that one, God?"

Gilmer rubbed his hands and said that the Lions' running attack could center around Looney. The Detroit publicity department predicted that Joe Don could be the first 1000-yard runner in the team's history. But Looney's first real headlines in Detroit involved a fight in the parking lot of the Golden Griddle Pancake House in Royal Oak. There was something about a tab for \$3.28 and a misunderstanding over who should pay it, and the scene finally ended with Looney trying to smash a beer bottle and use the jagged end, just like people did in the movies, only the bottle wouldn't break.

Then there were problems with his back, and finally, in one September game in 1966, Gilmer told Looney to carry a message into quarterback Milt Plum. "If you want a messenger," Joe Don told the coach, "call Western Union." That ended his career in Detroit. Next stop, the Redskins.

In Washington he achieved instant stature. He scored a touchdown in his first game ("It was a twin-two-sweep-trap . . . that means as much to me as it does to you"), coach Otto Graham said he was finally shaping up, the headlines involved the "New" Looney, and the honeymoon lasted right up until he announced he was playing out his option because of a salary squabble.

He wound up in the Army for a year, and finally New Orleans picked

him up as a free agent. He packed up his mastiff hound, the one he had loaded down with barbells ("to build up the dog's leg muscles") and almost converted into a health food addict with a sunflower seed and wheat germ oil diet, and headed south. The last report on the dog was that he had made a raid on a nearby henhouse.

"I might have known," sighed Doug Atkins, the Saints' giant defensive end. "The minute the kid straightens out, the dog goes bad."

There were gamblers and drinkers and bummers in the old days. There were a few eccentric geniuses like Johnny Blood, Green Bay's itinerant poet and world traveler, roaming over the landscape, immortalizing places like the old Astor Hotel in Green Bay. ("The only hotel in the world," Blood once said, "where you can call collect at 2 A.M. and get money".) But these were mostly poor men, and if not for football they'd be loading trucks and hauling freight and plowing rocky little patches of ground in no-name towns.

"Jug Earp, Mike Michalske, Cal Hubbard," the Green Bay druggist, John Holzer, once said, reciting the names of the old Packers like a roll call of famous World War I infantry divisions.

"They played their hearts out for \$35 or \$50 a game. They had a fierce desire, an almost animal desire for contact."

"I remember one time when Bronko Nagurski was horsing around in a second-floor hotel room with a teammate," said retired referee Ronnie Gibbs, master of the apocryphal, "and Bronk fell out the window. A crowd gathered and a policeman came up and asked, 'What happened?'"

"I don't know," said Nagurski. "I just got here myself."

George Halas tells about a 1933 Bear game in which Nagurski knocked out Philly linebacker John Bull Lipski.

"Bull had great recuperative powers, and he came back in the game and tried to tackle Bronko again, and he was rendered unconscious again. Two of the Philadelphia substitutes came off the bench and started to drag Bull off the field. Bull came to near the sidelines and started muttering something about getting back in there.

"But play had already resumed, and the Bears were headed in his di-

rection on a sweep with Nagurski leading the interference. Bronko overtook Lipski and the two subs about five yards from the sidelines, and WHAM, he threw a block that sent all three of them flying into the Eagles' bench.

"Poor Lipski was knocked out for the third time, a record that should stand until another Nagurski comes along, if one ever does."

When some of these old-timers become coaches, they evaluate their talent in an elemental way. They set their linemen on each other, one-on-one. The guy who survives is the first stringer. The Giants' old coach, Steve Owen, was saved from the Oklahoma dust bowl by football and he never forgot it. He lived by two mottos: "Football is a game played down in the dirt and always will be" . . . and, "Football was invented by a mean son of a bitch, and that's the way the game's supposed to be played."

In 1924 Steve tried out for the Kansas City Cowboys in old Blues Park, along with a character named Milt Rhenquist of Bethany, Kansas.

"The Swede was dressed in overalls and work shoes," Owen wrote in *My Kind of Football*. "He weighed about 240 and had heavily calloused hands. The Swede in scrimmage battered one half of our regular line. He wasn't scientific, just effective."

They used to say that the Steelers' Ernie Stautner, who played defensive tackle at 230 pounds, could have been transported 40 years back into time, pound by pound, and he would have fit right in with the leather-helmet boys. Ernie knew one move, the straight all-out shot, dead on his man, with every sinew and nerve dedicated to that one killing charge.

Once in camp a rookie lineman challenged him to a fight, so Ernie, a trifle mystified, but no less vicious, beat hell out of the youngster.

"Some damn fool college coach told that kid," Ernie said, "the best way to make a pro team was to lick the toughest veteran they had."

The year after he retired, Stautner coached the Steeler linemen. The first time Ernie's rookie protégé, Ben McGee, faced the Giants' great tackle, Rosey Brown, both men were thrown out for fighting.

"That guy was working my head over with his forearm," said the usually mild Brown. "I took that stuff from Stautner for ten years, but I'll be damned if I'm going to take it from a

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rookie."

The ruffians of football came in all packages, from the wildly flamboyant Eisenhower to the cold, tight-lipped Dan Birdwell, ex-defensive tackle of the Oakland Raiders.

"I kept listening to Birdie all game long, bitching about the holding," said his teammate Tom Keating. This was after one of the Jets-Raiders bloodbaths on the Coast. "We all knew something was going to happen. Then there was this pileup, and Dave Herman's [Jet offensive guard] hand was sort of sticking out of it, on the ground. Birdie ran over and stomped on it with his cleat. He looked like he broke every one of his fingers."

Eisenhower's No. 1 enemy was the dressing-room wall. "I've calmed down a little," he said a couple of years ago. "I really used to get psyched before a game. I'd try to tear anything apart—walls, doors, lockers, my teammates sometimes. They stay away from me now."

There was a slightly puckish twist to his nature, and the Patriots' publicity department once tried to cash in on it . . . until they learned not to fool around with the unknown.

Boston used to have a daytime kiddie show called "Boom Town"—Rex Trailer and his sidekick Pablo. Someone sold them on the idea of filming a show at Fenway Park, and the action would center around the Patriot's football team. Pablo would grab the ball and run for a TD with all the Patriots chasing him. Eisenhower, an extrovert, was picked to be one of the chasers.

Once the action started, though, a hidden bell clanged and all the 6-5, 250-pounder saw was an enemy player running for a touchdown, a guy who had to be stopped. So he stopped him.

"I'm kind of ashamed of it now," he said later. "Pablo was only about 5-3, and he was slow, so it wasn't any trick catching him. I didn't really hurt him. I just sort of jumped on his back. But what the hell? Why give a guy a free touchdown?"

Everyone has his favorite candidate for meanest player ever. A straw vote among recent veterans—players and coaches—probably would elect Hardy Brown. Physically, Hardy wasn't very impressive. He stood a shade over 6-0 and weighed 196; he had light sandy hair and a bland face. His speed wasn't much and he didn't

have any great talent for pass coverage.

What Hardy had, though, was a right forearm, sometimes a shoulder, that he turned loose with killing force and velocity.

"When he hit a guy," said his old teammate on the 49ers, Ed Henke, "it sounded like a rifle going off in the stadium. He missed a lot of tackles, but he just killed 'em when he hit 'em. There were no face guards in those days, and he had a shoulder block that could numb a gorilla. It was a skill nobody could duplicate."

Brown began in the old All-America Conference, with Brooklyn and Chicago. Later on he played for the 49ers, Colts, Redskins and Cards in the NFL.

"I won't say he was the toughest player who ever lived," said St. Louis assistant coach Chuck Drulis, who has been in the NFL since 1941, "but he was the meanest. He enjoyed hurting people. He broke more noses and caved in more faces than anyone else. I once saw him knock two players out on the same play. Good backs like Frank Gifford, Kyle Rote, and even big guys like Dan Towler feared him. They hated to run fakes into the line because Hardy hit them so hard."

Y. A. Tittle, who played against him in the AAFC and then with him at San Francisco, used to enjoy Hardy, which was sort of like having a pet Gila monster around the house.

"We ran a play at Hardy one game, and one of our guys was lying on the ground," Tittle once said, recalling the days he played against Hardy. "Then we ran a play the other way and Hardy stretched another guy. So I called the Bootsie play—everybody get Hardy Brown. When it was over, there were two of our guys lying on the ground. There was a lot of grumbling in our next huddle."

"The hell with this," one guy said. "Let's go back to the old way. At least he was only picking us off one at a time then."

The game attracts them all, the killers and cuckoos, and plain stand-up comics like ex-Detroit defensive tackle Alex Karras, whose world, off the field, was a never-ending series of incredibilities.

Alex likes people to know that he has lived other lives—in the com-

pany of Adolf Hitler and George Washington, for instance. ("Hitler was no ordinary Joe. He had this obsession to hold his breath for more than three minutes.")

And if you're ever in Athens, try to find someone who watched the 1957 Balkan Games. Alex was there, and he threw the shot put in that competition.

"It was open to anyone of Greek or Slavic ancestry, so I signed up and got a free trip out of it," Karras said. "I told them I threw the shot and discus, even though I never tried it in my life. On the boat going over, our coach told me there was no place to throw, but I could practice my form.

"He watched me and then he said, 'Your style is pretty unorthodox. What kind do you use?' I told him, 'step-over.' I finished last in the shot put with a 32-footer, and it was actually the best shot put throw of my life."

In Dallas, they were saddened when Danny Villanueva, the Mexican-American kicker, left after the 1967 season. When he first came to the Cowboys in 1965, he took the regular team psychological exam, and the psychologist reported to club officials that he shouldn't be called "Taco," the nickname the Rams had given him. "It saps his confidence," the psychologist explained, suggesting that a new nickname be found.

"How about calling him 'Toro'?" said a sportswriter.

"Great," said the psychologist.

Then Villanueva walked over to meet the press.

"Call me Taco," he said.

In 1966 he ran a fake punt 23 yards against the Cards, which started people speculating that perhaps he had been a halfback in college.

"What were you in college?" a writer asked him in the locker room after the game.

"I was a Mexican then, too," said Danny.

Ewbank's Jets left some unforgettable vignettes, before they started getting good. There was the midnight dive that Don Maynard took, fully clothed, from the high board at the swimming pool in Oakland's Edgewater Motel. Don collected \$50 for his stunt.

"You going to fine him?" someone asked Ewbank the next day, which happened to be the day of

the ballgame.

"Hell, no," the coach said. "If I fine anyone it'll be those other guys—for dumbness. Maynard's so crazy he would have done the stunt for nothing."

And there was the time that Weeb figured that a trip to the hot mineral baths in Sonoma would be just the thing to remove the kinks after an Oakland game. So he detailed his traveling secretary, John Free, a nervous little guy, to shepherd the team bus up to Sonoma.

"We passed by a winery," Free recalls. "The sign said Free Samples, Tasting Room. Everyone started banging the floor of the bus. They made me stop the bus, and we toured the winery. They all got half stoned, and the ones that didn't smuggled bottles of wine under their shirts and drank them on the bus on the way back to camp.

"That night at supper Weeb looked at the guys slumping over their plates and he said to me, 'See that, John? Those baths did help. I've never seen the players so relaxed.'"

The true personalities have their character molded before they ever hit the pros. When Texas Tech's Donny Anderson was being alternately wined and dined by Houston and Green Bay before he signed his \$600,000 contract, he'd make sure to remind the gentlemen in charge of the particular evening's entertainment: "No college broads."

"How's your speed?" a writer asked him just before he reported to the Packers' camp.

"All I've got to be, stud," said Donny, "is one step faster than Hornung."

Michigan State coach Duffy Daugherty has his own testimonial—to one of his boys who never even reached the pros.

"His name was Mad Pat," Duffy said. "He got so worked up he went around the tunnels banging his head against the wall. Then he was hammering at the door of the dressing room, roaring and shouting. He put his hand clean through the door once. Out on the field before the Purdue game, he started hitting all their defensive backs before the game even started. I had to break it up, and I'd tell him, 'You stupid son of a bitch, why do you want to make these guys madder than they already are?'"

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Claude Humphrey: Atlanta's Vicious Easter Bunny

He may be the toughest and meanest defensive end in football. So how do you explain him feeding swans after practice—or dressing in a bunny costume for a ghetto kids' Easter party?

BY PAUL HEMPHILL

For nearly an hour we had been sitting across a coffee table from each other, talking about the awesome world of professional football, in the luxurious high-ceilinged main reception room of the women's dormitory at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, where the Atlanta Falcons were winding down their preseason training camp. Claude Humphrey was dressed in a T-shirt and ragged-hemmed Bermuda shorts and sandals, his shiny black skin making his hulking body seem even larger, and he was clearly tiring of the interview. "Naw, you don't feel fear before a game," he said. "But let's say you get a little *queasy* when you've gotta go up against somebody like Bob Brown

at Oakland." His biggest thrill in the pros so far, he said, had been picking up a fumble and scoring with it to beat Minnesota. His goal for this year, he said, was to make *everybody's* All-Pro team. If he had it to do over again, he said, he would still go to a small college rather than to a Nebraska.

The interview almost exhausted, we leaned back in the deep-cushioned sofas and felt the warm sun filtering through the drapes. Practice would start in half-an-hour, and soon he would have to trudge off to be taped for it. "I don't mind telling you I hate practice," he said, as though talking to himself. As some of the other players began getting up from their chairs and

leaving for the training room, I asked Humphrey about his plans for the future; whether he, like so many other athletes, planned to move on into coaching when his playing days were over.

"Not the usual kind," he said.

"How's that?"

"You know—high school football, or even college."

"I don't understand."

"Well," he said, leaning forward on the sofa and wrapping one brawny hand around the other, "I'd like to help the kids who can't make it. You know, the ones who aren't the born athletes. The ones who need help the most. I'd like to take a kid who couldn't make the team and work with him in a city



Claude Humphrey

CONTINUED

recreation program or something like that all year, and then see him go out and make the team the next year. That's *real* coaching. I may not seem like the type, but I love kids more than anything."

The defensive end in pro football, like the goalie in hockey and the pitcher in baseball, operates in a world of his own. Essentially, he has only one job to perform each Sunday: Get the quarterback. "You aren't going to get beat by the running game," says one respected National Football League coach, speaking for them all. "You're going to get beat by the pass." The defensive end must be bigger and stronger and quicker than anyone else on the field, if he is to be a great one, but there is yet another ingredient he must possess. He must be mean. Rushing the passer is an out-and-out brawl, a street fight. At the snap of the ball the defensive end charges forward, makes a feint and then plows ahead in a savage scramble to behead the man with the ball. He uses everything he has—quickness, strength, guts, arms, knees, feet—in a mad dash to crush the quarterback before he has a chance to unload the football.

After four seasons in the National Football League, Claude Humphrey has established himself as one of the finest defensive ends in the history of pro football. "Claude's just coming into his own," says the usually reticent Norm Van Brocklin, head coach of the Falcons. "He's got it all figured out now." Not especially big at 6-5 and 245 pounds, the 28-year-old Tennessee State Little All-America has surprised no one. He was drafted first by the Falcons in 1968, became a regular at the start and was named NFL Rookie-of-the-Year. Last year he was named All-Pro by Newspaper Enterprises Association, and for the past two seasons has been

named to the All-Conference team. It is generally agreed in pro football that the only defensive ends better at this point than Humphrey are Carl Eller and Bubba Smith, and because of Humphrey's relative immaturity it could be only a matter of time before he takes over—for a long time—as King of the Hill. "Deacon Jones was my idol, the best there ever was," he says. "For a long time there I tried to pattern myself after Deacon, until I found out nobody could do that. I'd like to be as close to him as I can."

As you sit in the stands and watch him sling his arms and churn his legs in that mad dogfight after the opposing quarterback, you are tempted to call him—as many worshipful banners do at Atlanta Stadium on any given Sunday of mayhem—"Mean Claude." You want to idolize him—or write him off, as the case may be—as a suicidal jock insensitive to pain or any other form of natural human emotion. It is only when you meet him that you find how wrong and how unfair is that assessment. You find out then that he really means it when he says he loves kids more than anything else in the world.

Claude Humphrey was the only one of several Falcons to respond to an urgent plea last spring. An Easter-egg hunt was being given for a group of poor kids in an Atlanta ghetto last spring, and it was somebody's idea to dress up an out-sized football player in a ridiculous pink bunny-rabbit costume to entertain them. Falcon after Falcon found a reason not to go along with it, and finally Humphrey was called at his off-season home in Nashville. He got into his car at dawn, drove the 250 miles, put on the bunny suit, and spent some two hours hippity-hopping around to the delight and astonishment of the kids.

That, of course, was a one-shot affair. More importantly, Humphrey

proves his interest in kids every day of the off-season. As soon as the season ends he rushes back to Nashville to take up a job that is very important to him. While most other pro athletes are out on the speaker's circuit or selling stocks or doing television shows—or taking whatever else they can in capitalizing on their names—Claude Humphrey is virtually lost in an obscure job with relatively little to offer in the way of material benefits. He is running a city community center: Stringing up basketball nets, checking out Ping-Pong paddles, playing jacks with the kids, breaking up adolescent fist-fights.

"Look," he says, trying to under-rate what he is doing, "I grew up like a lot of those kids and I know what it means for them to have somebody around they can trust. If it hadn't been for almost every coach I had along the way, I don't know where I'd be today. It's not unselfish, what I'm doing. In a way, it's selfish—because I love every minute of it."

By all means, there was no silver spoon in the mouth of Claude Humphrey when he was born in June of 1944. He was one of five kids born to a poor black family in Memphis, Tennessee, the father being a school janitor and the mother a \$4-a-day maid who took in washing on the side. "A lot of the kids I grew up with are either dead or in jail," he says, "but I guess sports sort of changed me." He became interested in sports "about the time I outgrew my cowboy suit" and by the time he was in the seventh grade he was a 140-pound junior high school fullback.

When he entered Lester High School—with 240 boys in 12 grades, it was the smallest high school in Memphis—he was up to nearly 190 pounds, but a physical wreck. "I was a candy man. I might've been big, but it was from Payday candy bars." One day he passed out after practice, and diagnosis showed malnutrition. He was put on a strict diet—16 eggs, a gallon of milk and dozens of pills each day—and soon

he was hard and strong and ready to blossom as an athlete. Playing as a center on offense and at middle guard on defense, he made the high school All-America team as a senior and received some two dozen offers of college football scholarships.

In the end he settled on little Tennessee State (also known as Tennessee A&I) because he was reluctant to go anywhere else.

"I had some offers to big schools like Illinois and Nebraska," says Humphrey, "and I just didn't know what to do. I didn't have any doubt that I could play football anywhere in the country.

That wasn't what was worrying me. It was the classwork. I hadn't done much at all in school. Lester was just a little place, and a poor black school, and I was afraid if I went off to Nebraska or somewhere I'd get lost." So he enrolled at Tennessee State—and it was the real beginning of the making of Claude Humphrey. Ralph Boston and Wyomia Tyus and Wilma Rudolph, among other great black athletes, had preceded him there.

"People are all the time asking why so many good athletes come out of those smaller colleges every year," he says, "and sometimes I wonder about it myself. I guess it's because, just like I figured, you get more personal attention there." Still growing, Humphrey fell under the influence of defensive coach Joe Gilliam ("He's still the smartest defensive coach I've ever seen") and was soon terrorizing the other tough black football colleges from where so many pro stars still come. By now he was playing tackle and dreaming of playing in the pros. "If I'd thought I couldn't make it, it would have destroyed me. I got where I never thought of doing any-

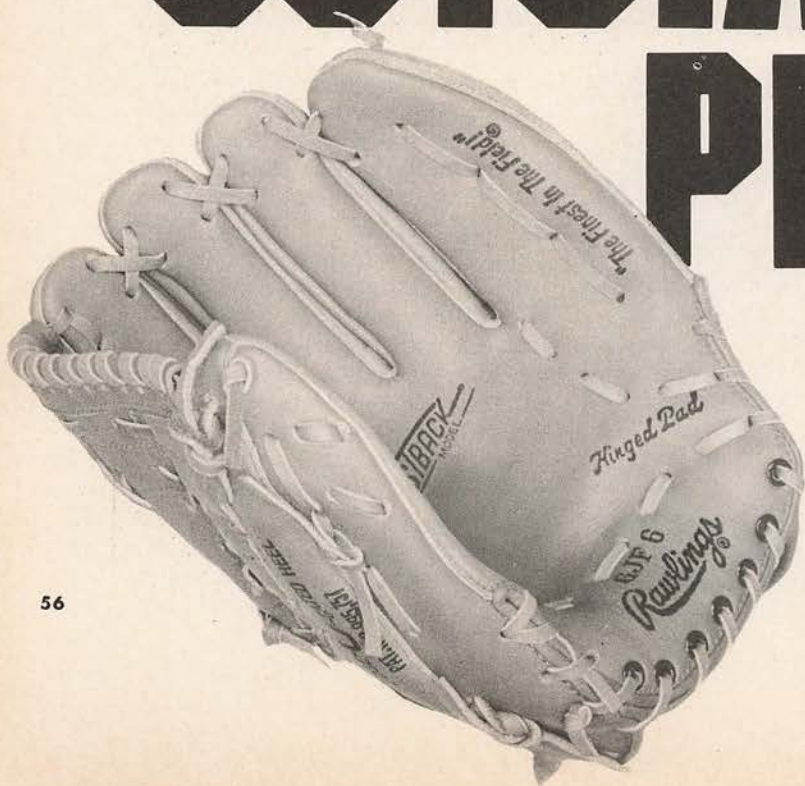


thing else. My roommate was Tommy Davis, who's playing in the Canadian League now, and we never talked about anything but playing in the pros." Led by Humphrey and quarterback Eldridge Dickey, Tennessee State was national Negro champion in 1967 and had a 35-3-1 record for three years. Following his senior season, Humphrey was named Little All-America by the Associated Press (*Time* and the *Sporting News* put him on their bona fide All-America teams) and was asked to play in four major post-season All-Star games.

When it came time for the annual pro football draft in 1968, the Atlanta Falcons had reached a critical stage in their young lives. The team had been added to the NFL in 1966, taking Tommy Nobis as its first draft choice, and Nobis had been about all the football-crazy Atlanta fans could cheer about. There had been a 3-11 finish in '66, followed by an even worse 1-12-1 record in '67. To make it more embarrassing, the 1967 draft had been a disaster: None of the 17 players selected ever played a minute in a regular-season Falcon game. Norb Hecker would soon be on his way out as head coach, to be replaced early in the '68 season by Van Brocklin. It was imperative that the Falcons draft a blue-chipper this time—not only to save face, but perhaps to save the franchise—and when it was announced they had taken an obscure defensive end from an obscure black college the howls went up from Falcon fans.

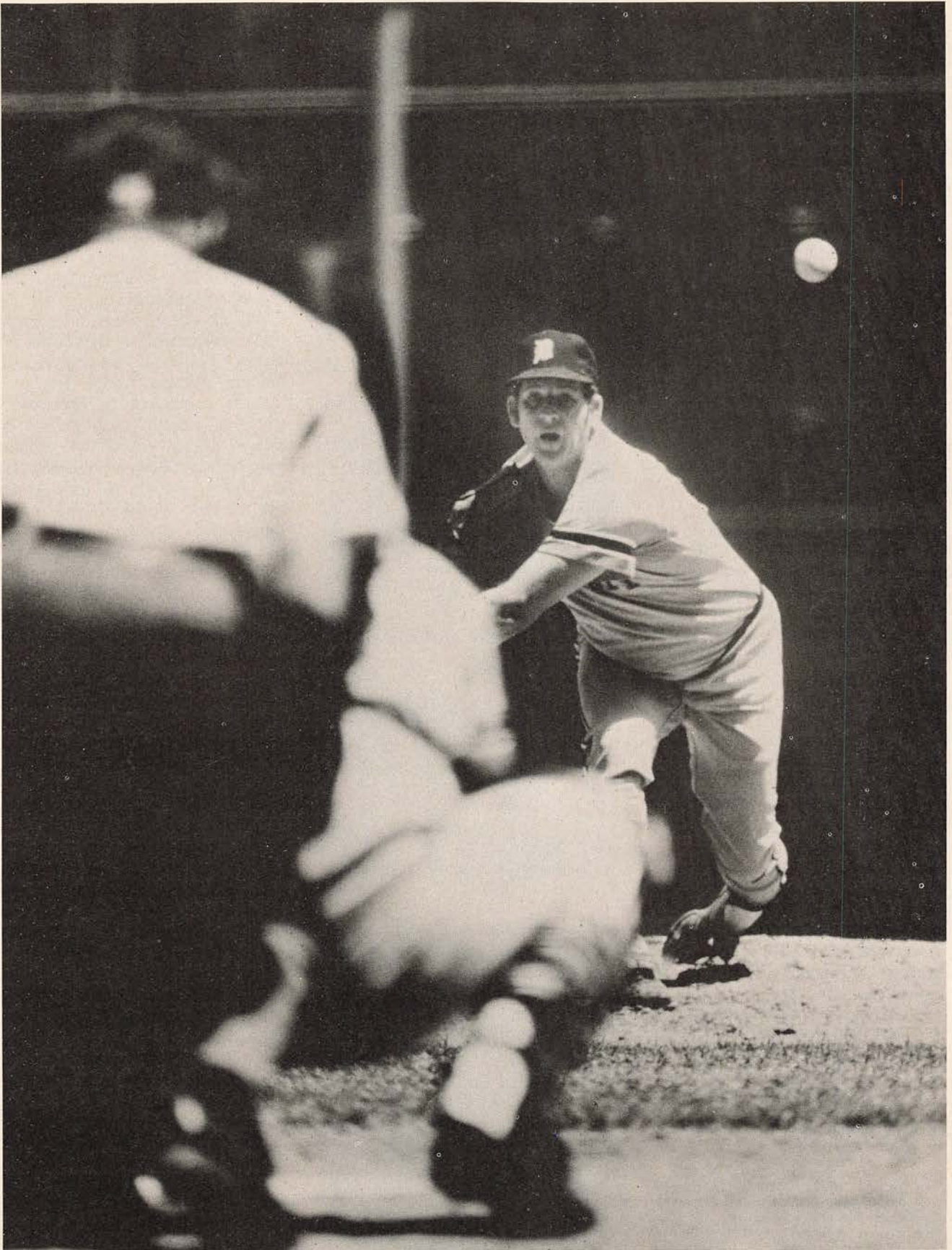
They needn't have worried, and they found that out quickly. From the very first day, it was obvious that Claude Humphrey would be around for a long time in the NFL. "He was raw and green, and needed coaching and experience," says Van Brocklin, who came along shortly after the season opened, "but he had the things a great defensive end needs. He was born with a great body, with great natural talent, and he had desire." Humphrey became a starter on opening day and played like a man possessed. He estimates he "got (Continued on page 120)

PITCHING COACHES SELECT BASEBALL'S OUTSTANDING PITCHER



Some fuel for hot stove league
controversy from the men
who should really know

BY LOU PRATO



Please Turn Page

One of the surest ways of precipitating an argument among buffs is to ask: "Who is baseball's outstanding pitcher?" Everyone, it seems, from the groundskeeper in Dodger Stadium to the armchair fan in Bangor, Maine, has an opinion.

But the question is not simple. Measuring the merits of one pitcher against another depends on dozens of variables. For instance, should a man's won-lost record or his earned run average be emphasized more? And what about the strength of the team that plays behind him? Should his pitching consistency over a period of years count more than a spectacular one- or two-season effort? And should a pitcher in one league be compared to someone in another league, when the competition and level of hitting may differ greatly?

Keeping these qualifying factors in mind, SPORT set out to discover just who is baseball's best pitcher. To get the expert view, we contacted the men who study and observe major-league pitchers more than anyone—the pitching coaches. Some of the coaches were reluctant to compare publicly the abilities of pitchers other than their own. Many coaches declined comment on pitchers in the other league, saying they have not seen enough of them to be fair. But only one coach, Montreal's Cal McLish, refused to discuss the subject.

The coaches, we should note, vary in background from Pittsburgh's Don Osborn, who never pitched in the majors, to Cleveland's Warren Spahn, one of the greatest lefthanders ever in the game. One coach, Rube Walker of the Mets, was a second-string catcher in his playing days and another, Don McMahon of the Giants, is still active at 42-years-old in a major-league career that dates back to 1957. It's not surprising, then, that there was no



unanimity of opinion among the 23 coaches, although the majority did agree that no pitcher today dominates the game as Sandy Koufax did in the 1960s.

"No one today sticks out like Koufax did," said Red Adams of Los Angeles. "Once he hit his stride, every game was potentially a low-hit and high-strikeout game. Though some of today's pitchers can do that on a given day, you don't look for it every game like you did with Koufax."

Still, one clear leader did emerge. The consensus is that Detroit's Mickey Lolich is baseball's outstanding pitcher. Lolich not only was the overwhelming favorite of American League coaches but he received almost as much support from National League coaches. He was chosen outright by four American League coaches and seven others listed him the equal of the league's best. Significantly, no coach ranked any other American pitcher ahead of Lolich. Meanwhile, five National League coaches also selected Lolich as the best in the rival league and another two classed him with Cleveland's National League expatriate, Gaylord Perry.

Three National League pitchers—New York's Tom Seaver, St. Louis' Bob Gibson and Philadelphia's Steve Carlton—ranked in a class slightly behind Lolich.

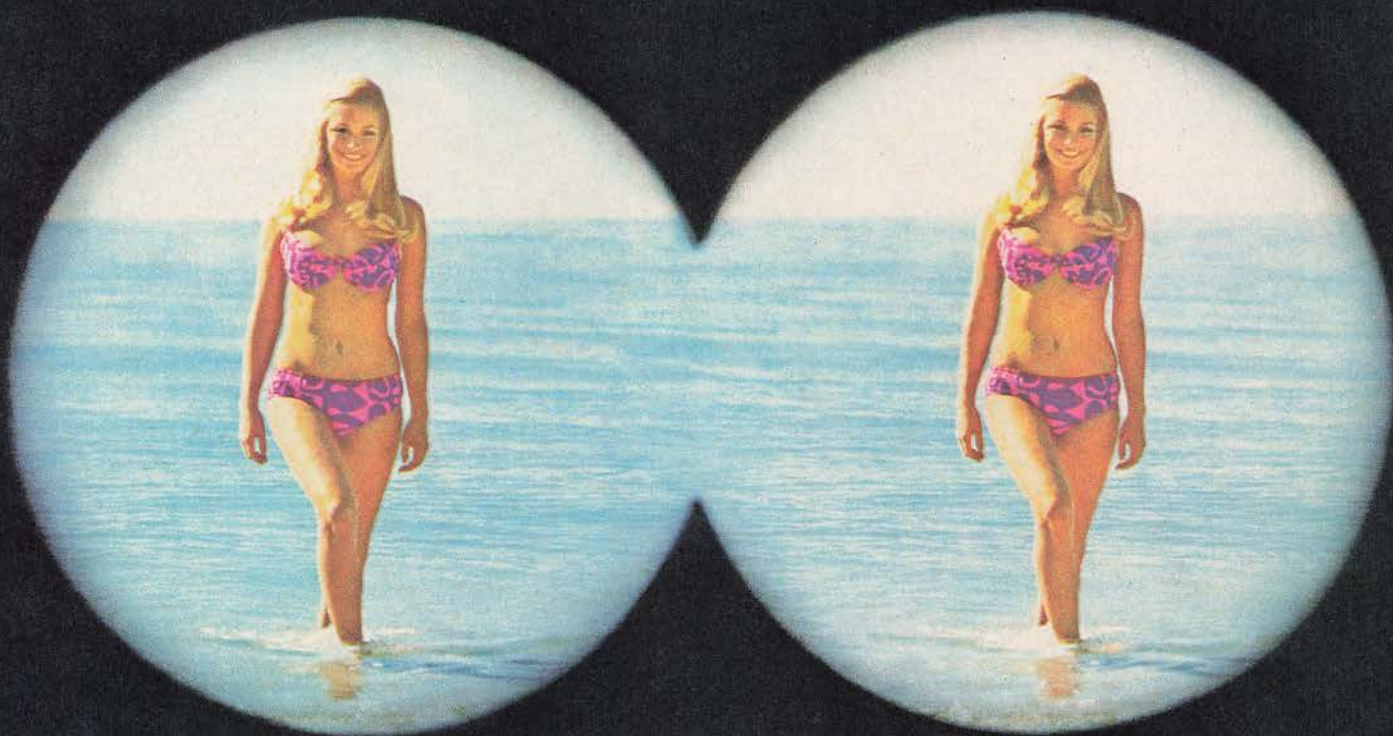
If it hadn't been for an injury that slowed him down this year, Seaver might have finished on par with Lolich. However, it was the general feeling that he will surpass Lolich in stature before long.

Three years ago Gibson probably would have been selected the best pitcher in baseball. Many coaches now feel that he is past his prime but still talented enough to be ranked among the elite.

Carlton, though he entered the majors almost at the same time as Seaver, is just emerging as a super pitcher after two consecutive glamor seasons with mediocre teams.

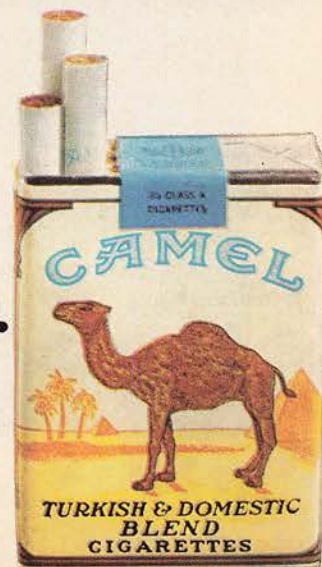
In a category somewhere below the first four pitchers are Gaylord Perry, (Continued on page 88)

The Tigers' Mickey Lolich (page 57) was rated best pitcher by the coaches. The Cards' Bob Gibson (above), the Mets' Tom Seaver (center) and the Phillies' Steve Carlton ranked one level below.



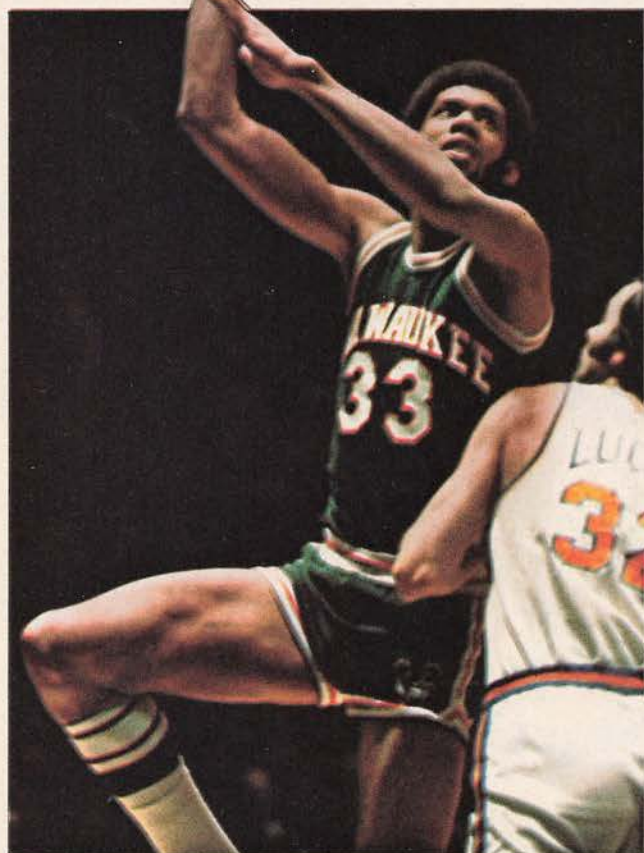
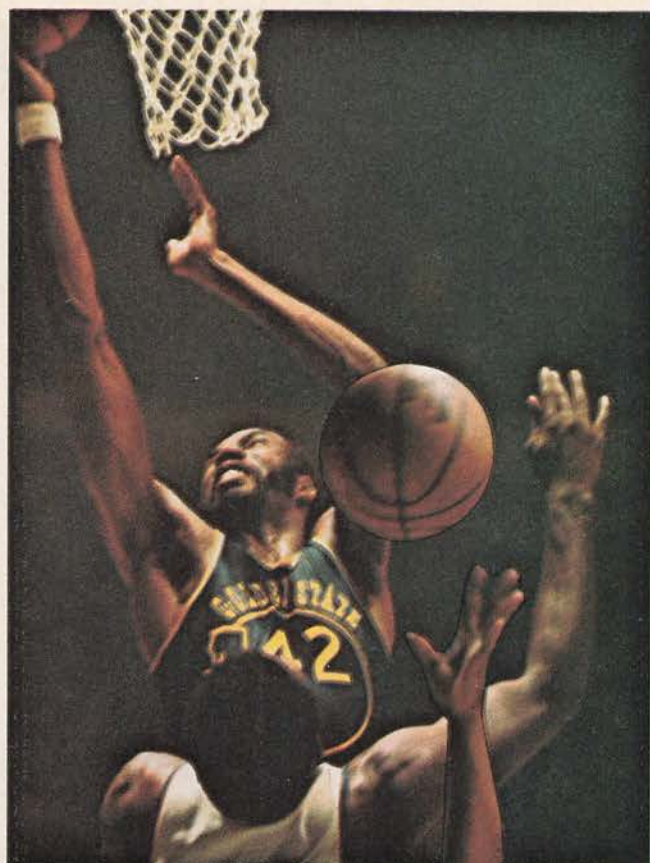
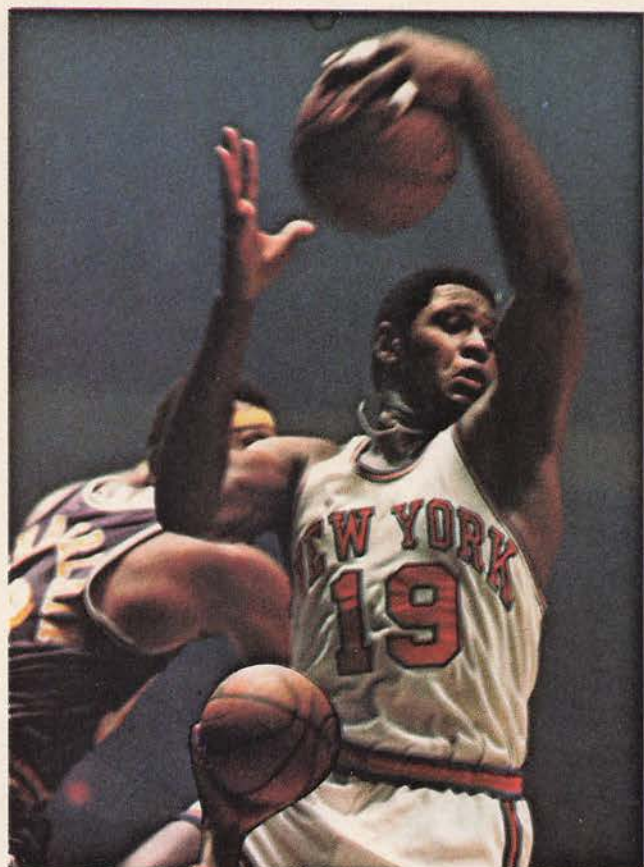
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HOW I SEE THE NBA THIS SEASON

The Celtics' outspoken general manager gives a team-by-team rundown and his predictions—which may surprise you—for the final standings in each division, plus the playoff winner

BY "RED" AUERBACH

Who is the National Basketball Association champion? Is it the team that wins its division and the most games in the regular 82-game season, or is it the playoff champion? Are there four champions or one?

Let me try to answer these questions by posing the not entirely

original idea that there are two NBA seasons. The first season consists of 82 games and is complete unto itself, determining champions that have accomplished one important goal. The second, the playoffs, is a distinct entity—and produces a second champion.

For many years, when we (the Celtics) would win our division, we tended to let down. We felt we had proven we were the best club over a five-month span. But then we'd

have to turn around and play against teams who, while not exactly rested, had been pointing more for the playoffs than winning regular-season games.

As a result, on many occasions during the dynasty years the Celtics would lose the first playoff game right after the season, thereby giving away the home-court advantage which was one thing we'd worked for all year. But the first season means more than the home-court advantage for the playoffs; it has a meaning and value of its own.

That's what this article is mostly about, the first season, and while I don't see too many startling changes (the college crop was not that good), I do see the potential for some surprises from two clubs in particular: Golden State and Buffalo. In fact, I'm *not* going to predict a repeat for National Basketball Association Champion Los Angeles in the Pacific Division.

But, first things first. A championship team, in the first season, needs power. It needs a strong bench because of the potential for injuries but, above all, it needs power. When you have a Jabbar, a Reed, a Chamberlain or a Thurmond, many times you will win a bad game by virtue of his power, whereas a team that relies primarily on speed has to play good ball all of the time throughout the year to win. Naturally, this style of play takes more out of a team than one with a powerful center.

A team that runs a lot has a tough game every time out. But when a Bill Sharman takes the Los Angeles Lakers and combines power with running, then you have an overpowering combination. That is why he not only won the regular season and set records, but won the playoffs as well.

In the playoffs, some of these running teams find it a little tougher because power teams will give a hundred percent effort to contain the running game—much more so than during regular-season play.

So everybody would like to have a power guy. When you're in trouble, you go to the big guy to get

Above, left: the Knicks' Willis Reed; above, right: Golden States' Nate Thurmond; below, left: the Bucks' Kareem Jabbar; below, right: the Bullets' Archie Clark—these are key men in the NBA's four divisional races this season.

THIS SEASON

CONTINUED

you the clutch basket or the clutch rebound. That can be the difference. Anyway, here's how the NBA shapes up.

With me, any discussion of the NBA starts with Boston and that means the Atlantic Division.

Boston: The Celtics, with coach Tom Heinsohn in his fourth year, will be even better prepared than last year when we won the Atlantic Division title. The addition of our top draft choice, guard Paul Westphal of USC, will give us a little more stability in the backcourt and help us make the play down the middle on the fast break. The all-around defensive play, rebounding and scoring of Paul Silas who we obtained from Phoenix for the rights to Charlie Scott, makes our front line very formidable.

The Celtics' only weakness is at the center position; Dave Cowens starts and Hank Finkel does an adequate job as a backup. However, if an injury should sideline Cowens, it would pose serious problems. And even with Cowens, the Celtics cannot win on power. They must win on finesse, determination and a cohesive team effort.

Heinsohn overcame the hazards of being a rookie coach and has finally come into his own. He has a firm concept of the game and good control of his men. John Havlicek, I feel, should have as good a year as last. He's not that old yet. Tom Sanders is over the knee injury and should have a tremendous year as a fill-in forward. The most improved player should be Steve Kuberski. He's strong, can run and rebounds well. Clarence Glover had been working hard all summer, and we hope he can show a great deal more this year. Add to this unit Don Nelson, still coming off the bench in key situations to win a game.

In the backcourt—with West-

phal, is Don Chaney, who has more and more confidence in his outside shooting, along with Jo Jo White who is, I feel, in the superstar category, and the sparkplug Artie Williams—we have depth and balance beyond that of last year.

I see the Celtics winning the Atlantic Division title in a very close race with New York and Buffalo. **New York:** I feel the Knicks are not a young club, but they have tremendous experience and they have the advantage of playing in Madison Square Garden where the people spur them on but good. However, their chances for success, of really going anyplace, rest on how many games Reed will play and what condition he will be in for the season. DeBusschere is one of the greatest forwards of all-time, but he is a year older. Bradley is a year older; Barnett is a year older; Lucas is a year older. . . .

However, they move well, are extremely well coached and they have plenty of incentive. Being in New York and getting exposure that will help them in other phases of their professional lives—endorsements, commercials and the like—can act as a powerful motivating factor.

Walt Frazier has been the key to the team for the last few years, but Reed will be trying exceptionally hard and if he comes back to his full potential, I feel that the Celtics will go right down the line with the Knicks.

Buffalo: I feel that Buffalo will be a contender right up there with Boston and New York because of their acquisition not only of forward Bob McAdoo of North Carolina, who I feel is the best new player to be added to the National Basketball Association this season, but because of their growing maturity and what should be a strong coaching situation.

Their other fine rookie, Harold Fox from Jacksonville, should help.

But he can't really turn them around the way a McAdoo can, since their backcourt was strong anyway with the likes of Walt Hazzard, Mike Davis, Randy Smith and Freddie Hilton.

I think a year's experience under his belt for Elmore Smith and an injury-free season for John Hummer will give them a strong and big front line. Add Bob Kauffman and you have a team that rebounds and can also run.

In addition to this, they have a new coach in Jack Ramsay, who is extremely talented and should put them right up there in a challenging position.

Philadelphia: The 76ers are undergoing a period of change. How soon they will be able to come back into contention remains to be seen. They lost Bill Cunningham to the Carolina Cougars of the ABA. However, they acquired John Block, a forward who can play some backup center (compensation from Milwaukee for Wally Jones).

Their draft of Fred Boyd of Oregon was a good one, but as of this writing, he had not signed; whether he will play in the NBA is not known. He would help them, but would not take them out of a last-place situation in the Atlantic Division.

I think the fact that they have a new coach in Roy Rubin might give them a little impetus, although it may take the team some time to become adjusted to his style. Though Roy is a competitor, there won't be that much pressure on them, so anything positive they can do without a guy like Cunningham would be to their credit.

Over the long haul, they will have their problems. Hal Greer is now 36 years old and, while Dave Wohl—over his freshman year and a good defensive backliner—will help, Kevin Loughery is no child either. They figure to have their problems.

The Central Division

Baltimore: With the arrival of Elvin Hayes, the Bullets have depth up front. They had the depth in

the person of Gus Johnson a year ago, but his injury cost them experience and power in the forecourt. However, they can expect a great deal of help from Terry Driscoll who will get a shot at Johnson's job. With Jack Marin and Stan Love up front last year, the Bullets didn't scare anyone on defense. But Marin went to Houston, and now their front line—with Love, Hayes, Driscoll, Wes Unseld and Dave Stallworth—is to be reckoned with. Not only do they have good rebounding power, they have speed and the ability to start the fast break, because Unseld can hit the outlet pass better than anyone else in the game. They also have good scoring punch.

Their backcourt is very good. With Mike Riordan, Phil Chenier and Archie Clark, they don't have to take a back seat to any backcourt in the league. They can score and run with anyone, and they have solid coaching in Gene Shue.

The only thing that can hinder them is the fact that they are a lame-duck team (they'll eventually move to Washington) playing in Baltimore and there is no way to know how much crowd support they will get. I think it is going to be a close race with Atlanta but that the Bullets should win the contest. If Atlanta does win, it may well be because the Hawks will be in a new building with tremendous backing.

Atlanta: The Hawks did not add to their team, having given up their top college choice in the hardship draft for Tom Payne. But with a new building and with a healthy Pete Maravich—who has gained back the 20 pounds he lost last year—the Hawks will have strength.

Maravich is, in my opinion, one of the great players in the game. Last season, under extreme adversity, he never complained, moaned or groaned, but went out and did the best he could. I'm looking forward to seeing Maravich have a great year and be a strong All-NBA candidate.

Atlanta has two genuine superstars in Maravich and Lou Hudson

and has strong players in forward Don Adams, center Walt Bellamy and frontcourt men Jim Washington, George Trapp, Bob Christian and Don May. Their front line is pretty good. Their backcourt, with Maravich, Herm Gilliam and Hudson, is also strong.

The question mark with the Hawks is Walt Bellamy. He will be a year older, and he must be as good this season as he was last in order for the Hawks to finish a very close second to Baltimore—or, conceivably, to edge them out. New coach "Cotton" Fitzsimmons has proven ability, giving the Hawks



Auerbach predicts that his Celtics will meet the Lakers in the NBA title finale.

continuity of strong coaching that began with general manager Richie Guerin.

Cleveland: I think Austin Carr is still a question mark. He has fantastic ability, fantastic desire and the pride to be a superstar. However, we still don't know the extent of his foot injury.

The Cavaliers have a hustling, big ballclub. They run well, play good defense and can beat anybody on the proverbial "given night." It is a very young club and, with the experience received last

year under the guidance of coach Bill Fitch, I think they're going to be a pretty close third.

The Lenny Wilkens for Butch Beard trade looks like a definite plus for Cleveland. If the Cavs can sweeten the pot enough to entice the 35-year-old backcourt ace away from the West Coast, they will have acquired one of the great basketball brains. Of course, it's doubtful that Lenny can contribute as a player as much as he contributed as a player-coach with Seattle in 1971-72. But his years of experience will benefit the young Cavs—and Austin Carr in particular. With Sorenson and John Johnson at forwards, Walt Wesley and Rick Roberson at center, and Carr and Wilkens in the backcourt, the Cavs will be tougher than ever before. If Wilkens shows up, it wouldn't shock me to see them get a playoff spot.

Houston: Regardless of the fact that Houston, coached by Tex Winter who finally has his style of club, should click, they are going to have to start from scratch with all of the changes that must be made.

The Rockets do have some good personnel, but I personally think that the loss of Elvin Hayes is going to hurt them up front, despite the fact that they will have an experienced Cliff Meely and Rudy Tomjanovich in the forward positions along with Jack Marin—a very talented shooter and intelligent player.

I don't believe that down the middle Otto Moore and Dick Cunningham will be sufficient to make the Rockets a contender in their division. The backcourt of Mike Newlin, Jimmy Walker (acquired from Detroit), rookie Jim Silas and Dick Gibbs will be quite good, but they will miss some of Johnny Egan's playmaking now that he is assistant coach. Unhappy with the Pistons, Walker should benefit from the change of scene and the Rockets should benefit also. He now does not have to live in the shadow of Dave Bing; he can go out on his own and handle the ball and direct the club as *(Continued on page 84)*



Colt teammates take opposing views on one of sports' most controversial issues

BY FRANK ROSS

Two seasons ago, when the Baltimore Colts were on their way to a Super Bowl championship, Bill Curry and Mike Curtis had many things in common. Each was chosen for the All-AFC team—Mike as the first-string middle linebacker and Bill as the second-team center. In addition, they were roommates when the Colts were on the road. Ordinarily, that wouldn't be surprising, except for what happened prior to the opening of camp that year.

For 1970 was the year that the NFL Players Association went on strike. Mike Curtis was the only regular player in the NFL to report to training camp on time, thereby crossing the first picket line in the history of the game. And Bill Curry, a staunch supporter of the strike, is now the Public Relations Director for the NFL Players Association.

However, the situation never led to acrimony between Curtis and Curry. Quite to the contrary, the two players never allowed their views about the merits of organized unions in sports affect either their personal relations or professional lives as Colt teammates. Recently they sat down with us to discuss the union issue.

Interviewer: *The first question is directed to Mike. Can you tell us why you have decided to resign from the NFL Players Association?*

Curtis: Well, it's mainly because

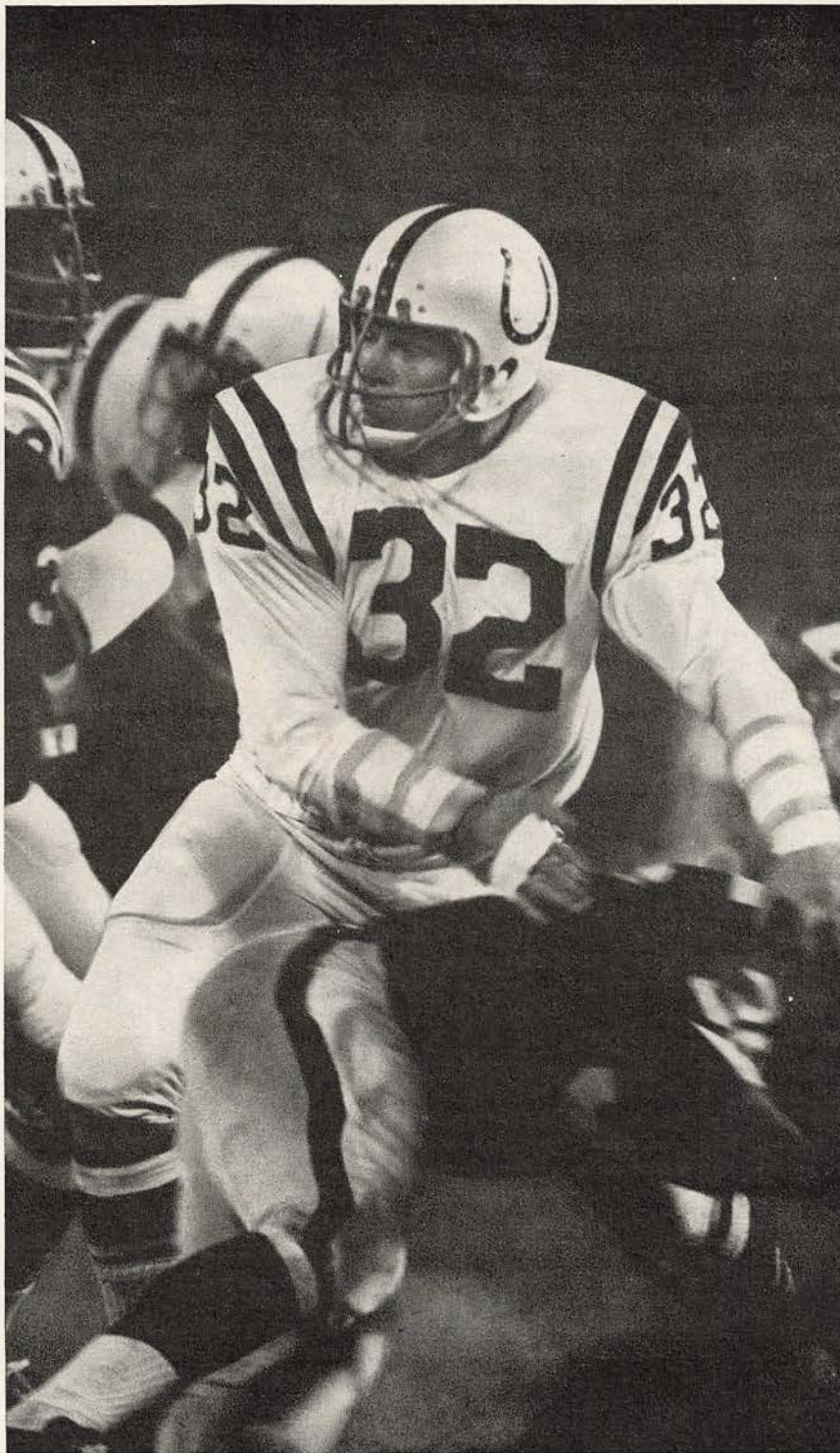
SOUND OFF!

I don't believe in unions. I think the ballplayers have enough. I don't like to see the game jeopardized by bringing in the factor of union negotiations. The unions were a good and necessary thing back in the late Twenties and early Thirties in that they came to the assistance of workers who may have been exploited by different forms of management. However, I feel that we've reached a point where they are much too strong. We have situations now in which the unions have taken over and in some cases ruined the business that they were part of. A great example of this is the trend toward the dissolution of many metropolitan newspapers.

Obviously, the Players Association hasn't ruined the game as yet, but I don't want to risk the possibility of being involved in such a situation. I think that by raising the retirement fund contributions of the teams, you'll need more revenue sources, and more money will be needed when the other fringe benefits are increased. Of course, the money has to come from somewhere, and the more that is contributed, the less there is for profits and salaries. The teams will be forced to raise ticket prices to match each jump in the cost factor, as dictated by the rise in pension contributions. Then you'll have reached a saturation level or a point of diminishing returns. It's because I don't want to see this happen that I am no longer a member of the NFLPA. I'm satisfied, and I think a lot of other ballplayers are satisfied as well.

Interviewer: *Bill, what is your reaction to Mike's sentiment—commenting either as an individual or as spokes-* (Continued on page 108)

Center Bill Curry (left) anchors the Colt offensive line, while middle linebacker **Mike Curtis (right)** leads the defense.



Mike Curtis & Bill Curry Debate: Do NFL Players Need A Union?

From the living room of Mike Epstein's ranch house south of Oakland you can see across the valley to the Bay and across the Bay to San Francisco. On a perfect day you imagine you can see the ocean beyond.

It is the kind of view that elicits the cliché—on a clear day, you can see forever. Mike Epstein looks out that living room and he says, "I know better. You really can't see forever."

For one thing, it is seldom a perfect day, our poisoned air being what it is, foul, yellow, brown muck. For another, Mike Epstein doesn't look at life through rose-colored lenses. He sees things as they are. "You are what you are," he says. The sentence is pure Epstein. Writers have asked the 6-4, animal-strong Epstein how come he isn't a superstar, what with all that superstar promise a few years back. When he readied to play his first full year with Baltimore in 1967, this magazine labeled him one of the three coming American League superstars, he and Sam McDowell and Boog Powell. McDowell has struck out his 300 hitters in a season, led his league in earned-run average, won 20 games. Powell has four times hit more than 30 home runs in a season; his World Series marks are among the best in all baseball.

Mike Epstein? After six years he's averaged .247. How come? The questions bother him. He isn't a superstar, he says, so don't expect superstar stats. He once told Ron Bergman, an Oakland writer: "I'm just an average ballplayer trying to do his job. Why do people expect me to hit 40 or even 30 home runs a year? I'll hit 20. Maybe you're not used to having players talk like this, but I'm just being realistic." That's anger talking, that's pride talking. Mike Epstein is a proud man, insulted by his mediocre deeds. He told Bergman: "You can't expect superstar stats from a man who doesn't receive superstar money," which is pure cop-out. Superstars burst upon you, money or no—Mays, Mantle,

Mike Epstein: Somewhere Between Journeyman & Superstar

The Oakland first baseman has lived through superstar expectations and disappointments. Now he calls himself "an average ballplayer" and finds his peace off the field

BY ARNOLD HANO

Koufax, Vida Blue. Which is why you can't predict the next superstars. They do not slowly evolve, they explode upon your consciousness. Mike Epstein has been lumbering across our indifference.

Last Thanksgiving, in that living room, facing a smog-tainted forever, or its reasonable facsimile, Mike Epstein and his blonde wife, Barbara, took stock.

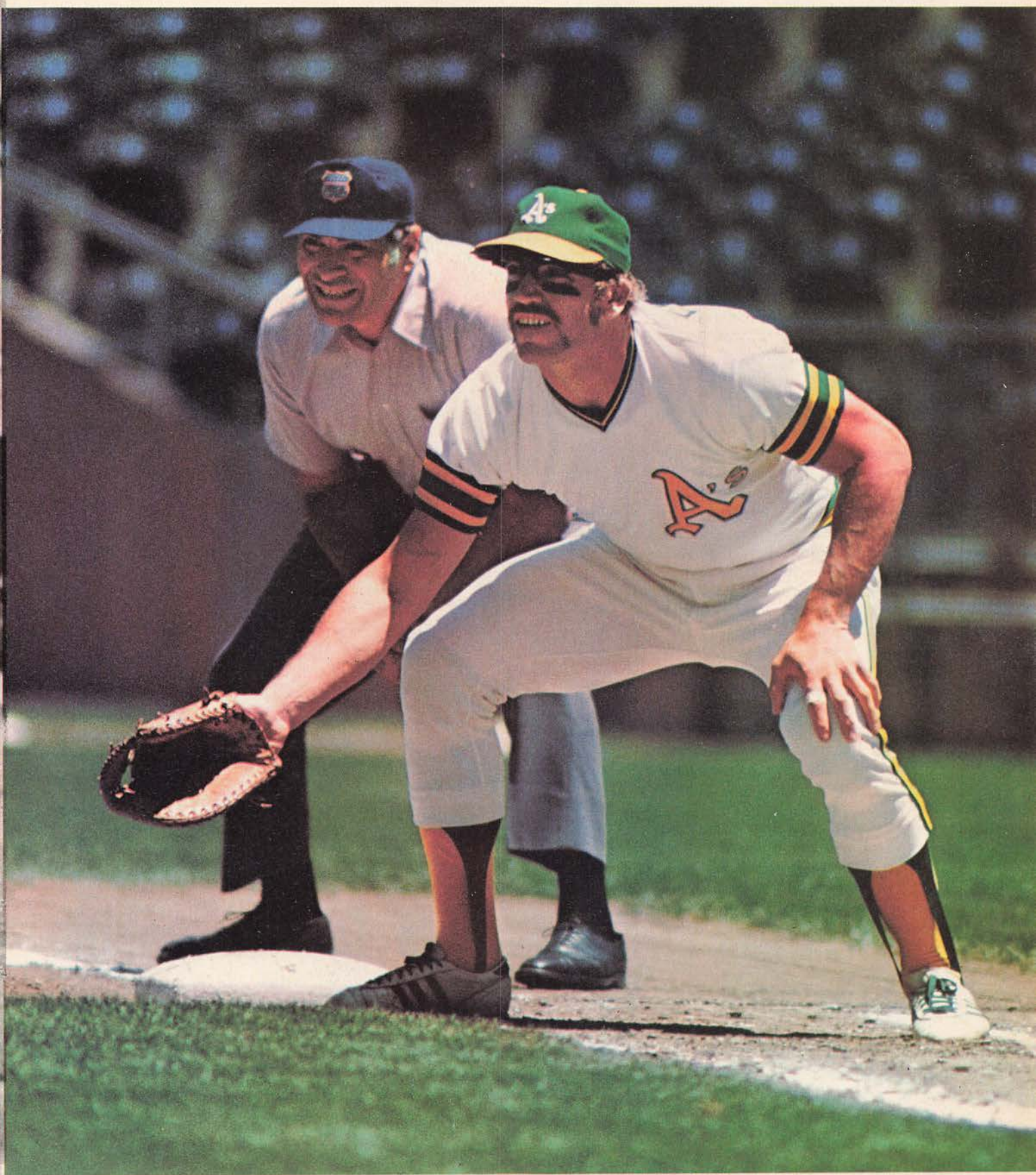
He'd had a dreadful season, a disastrous second half. He batted a measly .237. He once went 45 days between home runs. "I'd stopped swinging. I was just *feeling* for the ball." He demonstrates taking tentative stabs with an invisible bat, like a blind man's cane poking for the curb. He sat down for lefthanded pitching, replaced by ancient Tommy Davis, and some days he sat down for righthanded pitching as well. When it came time to meet Baltimore in the league playoffs, he sat on the bench.

Mike Epstein almost quit baseball that Thanksgiving. "I wasn't

playing. I'd let a lot of people down. Things had snowballed. My wife and I talked about what had happened, wondering why I had tailed off." He doesn't know the answer, but he thinks it was fatigue, mental fatigue, mainly. The Epsteins decided on a simple solution. He would lose weight. Always he had played up around 230 to 235. He took off 30 quick pounds. "When you have a goal, it is so easy," he says. He got down to 204 pounds, which was too light, so he eased himself up to his present 211 pounds. This year, playing at his lightest since high school, he's felt better than he's ever felt in baseball. He's sure he's licked his mental fatigue. "Everything germinates in the mind," Epstein says. "You can think yourself into a slump. You can make yourself into a winning player."

So you are what you are, but what you are depends on what you want to be. The realist yields to his pride.

Which is a long intro to a brief



Epstein

CONTINUED

piece about yet another ballplayer. "You can't polish a turd," says Mike Epstein, in a self-effacing mood, and you can't produce glorious language about a .247 hitter who's having a good year. Epstein has had a good year before, 1969, when he slugged 30 home runs, knocked in 85 runs, batted .278. That's the kind of year he's having, as I write this, and I suspect that's the kind of season he'll end up with. Good, not great.

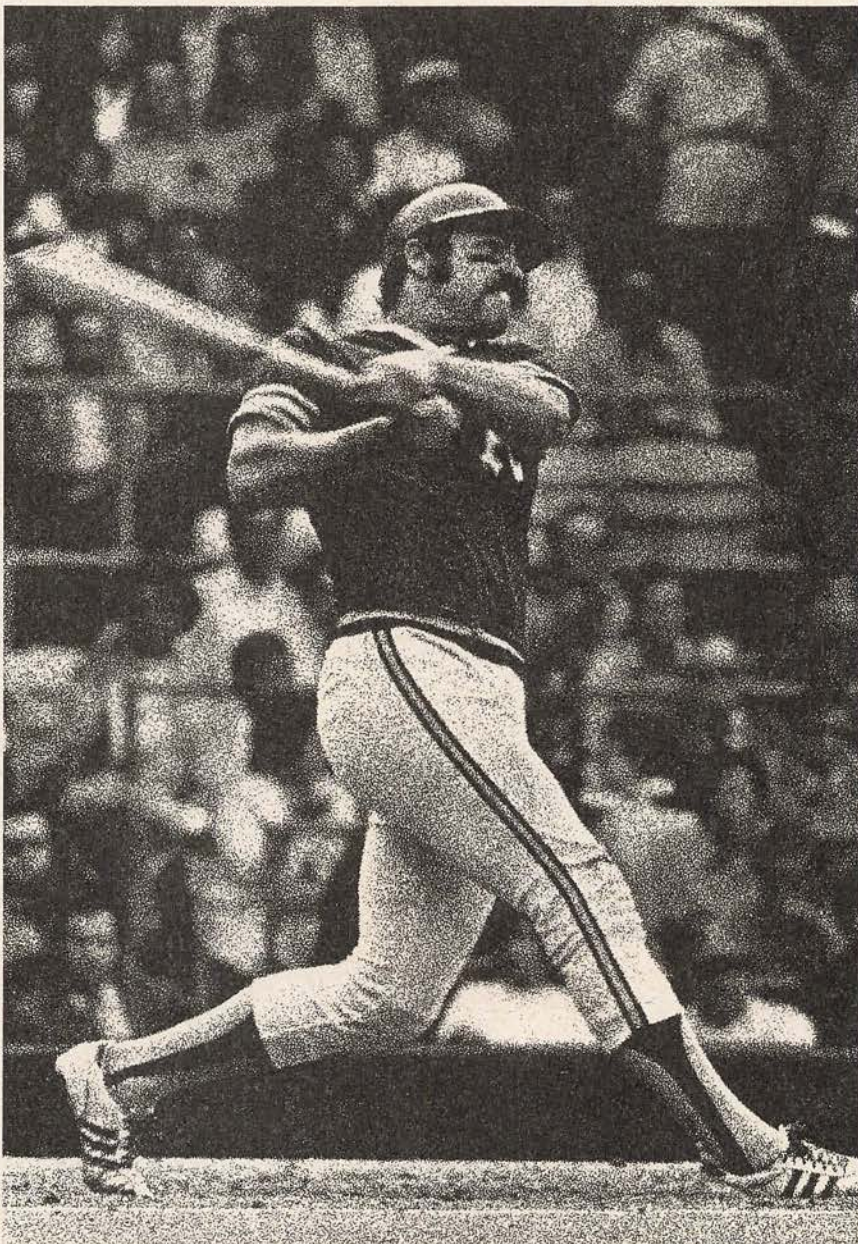
Yet there is something solid about Mike Epstein, a quality that seems to begin within his powerful frame, infuse his whole being and influence an entire club. You may have seen that Monday night televised game in August, Oakland at Baltimore, the A's one game ahead of white-hot Chicago in the AL West, and you may remember Tony Kubek saying how Oakland looked to Epstein's bat, what with Reggie Jackson out with a sore rib cage. On that next fastball from Jim Palmer, Epstein reached out and stroked the ball over 420 feet, beyond the centerfield wall, for his 19th home run. Kubek hadn't said the A's needed Sal Bando's bat, or Joe Rudi's. Mike Epstein's. Perhaps it is his size. His manner. He has a big booming voice, a big handlebar mustache. He could have been a drinking companion for Jack London at the Last Chance saloon. He is big and looks bigger. He looks strong and is stronger. Curt Blefary, no midget at 6-2 and 208, once said of Epstein: "He could pinch my head off."

Add to the strength a mountain-man personality that sets him apart and makes him the guy you lean on. For instance, he still shaves with a straight-edge razor. He likes to carry a pocket watch with his two daughters' photographs inside. He doesn't tote an attaché case on the road, like

other players; he throws saddlebags over his shoulder. The only vehicle the Epsteins own is a Ford Bronco truck. In the winters, Epstein packs his saddlebags and trucks off to a cabin he owns in Lusk, Wyoming, where he hunts and fishes, the temperature falling to 20 below. His wife calls him Mr. Freeze. At home in summer he occasionally camps out on the deck, in his sleeping bag. "We have deer in the backyard. I hear their heavy breathing. They eat and browse, and I hear them talking their guttural talk. That's part

of me."

He is a throwback to the late 19th century (his favorite period in American history) when people moved west, to homestead, to grub for life in a hostile environment. "I've always been enamored of those people and that period. The more I read Thoreau's *Walden* and Mark Twain's *Roughing It*, the more I felt like an outdoorsman." Epstein does more than just read about it. He practices the outdoor life. He has written articles for a hunting magazine, *The Rifle*. He has designed and patented a



hunting rifle, the .375 Epstein Magnum. "I'm a loner," he says. "I'm an individualist. I hope to buy a dude ranch near Lake Tahoe, with 125,000 acres of wilderness behind it."

He looks down at his huge hands, "Everything I own, I owe to one thing. My own hands. It's a wonderful feeling. Nobody ever gave me a gift. When I'm finished with baseball, I want to be able to say, 'This is the best Mike Epstein could do. I did the best my ability could make me.'"

Not that he is totally the out-

doorsman. Like Thoreau or Twain, he has his meditating side. He turns on his record player, country-and-western music, and he closes his eyes. "I take off an hour each day like that. I lie on my bed, the music turned up, and I look at the scene. I come to peace with myself."

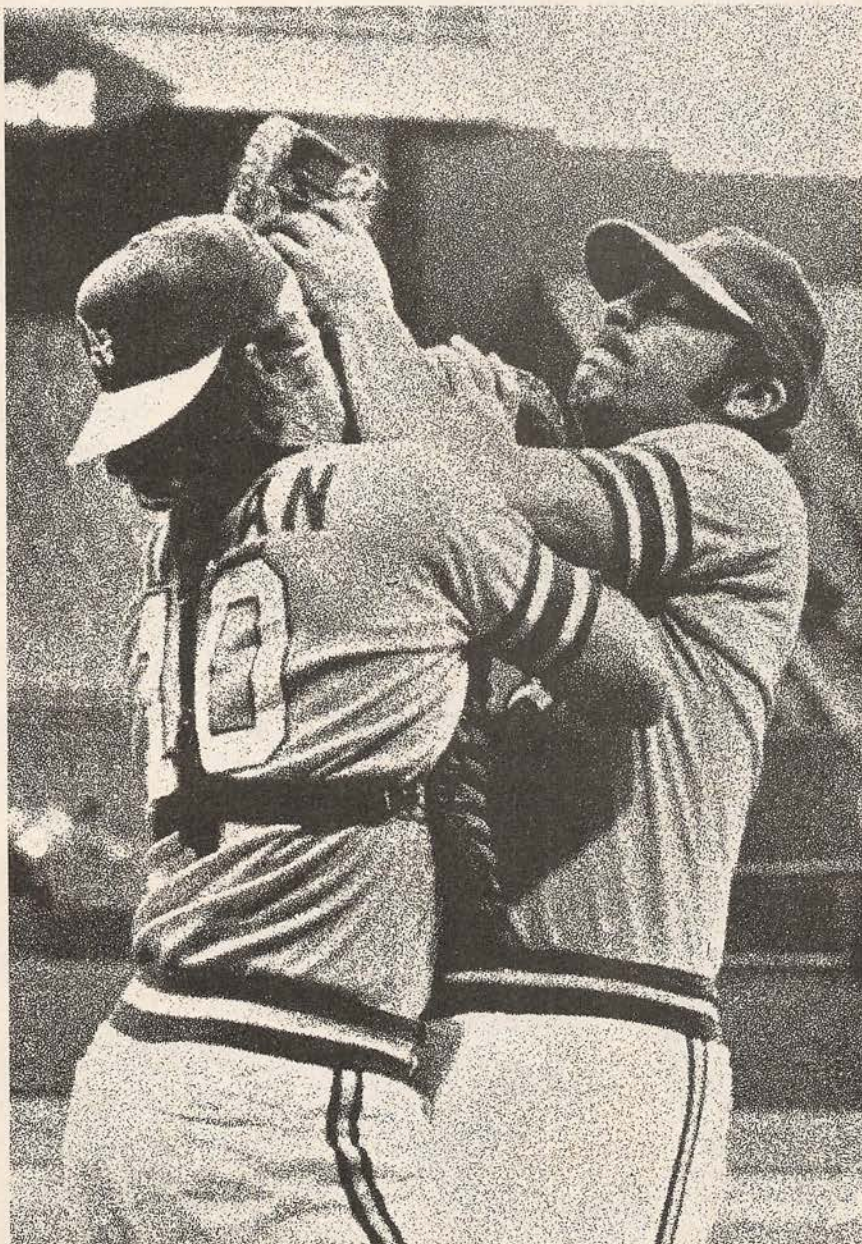
Mike Epstein's pilgrimage to peace has had its wars. He is, as you undoubtedly know, Jewish, born Michael Peter Epstein, on April 4, 1943, son of Jack and Evelyn Epstein, grandson of an

immigrant Russian tailor. It is another question Mike Epstein re- sents: How come a nice Jewish boy like you plays games for a living? He doesn't believe there's any such thing as "a nice Jewish boy like you." Jewish boys come in all shapes and sizes, and of all dispositions. When the Epsteins— Mike and his two sisters and his folks—moved out of the Bronx, New York, to Hartsdale, in West- chester County, Mike got into kid fights which were terribly one- sided because he didn't know how to fight back. His father Jack shoved him back outside and said, "Learn," so Mike threw rocks back at other kids' heads, which isn't what nice Jewish boys do, except people have to survive. He saw his first zipgun in the Bronx and he began to build rifles soon after.

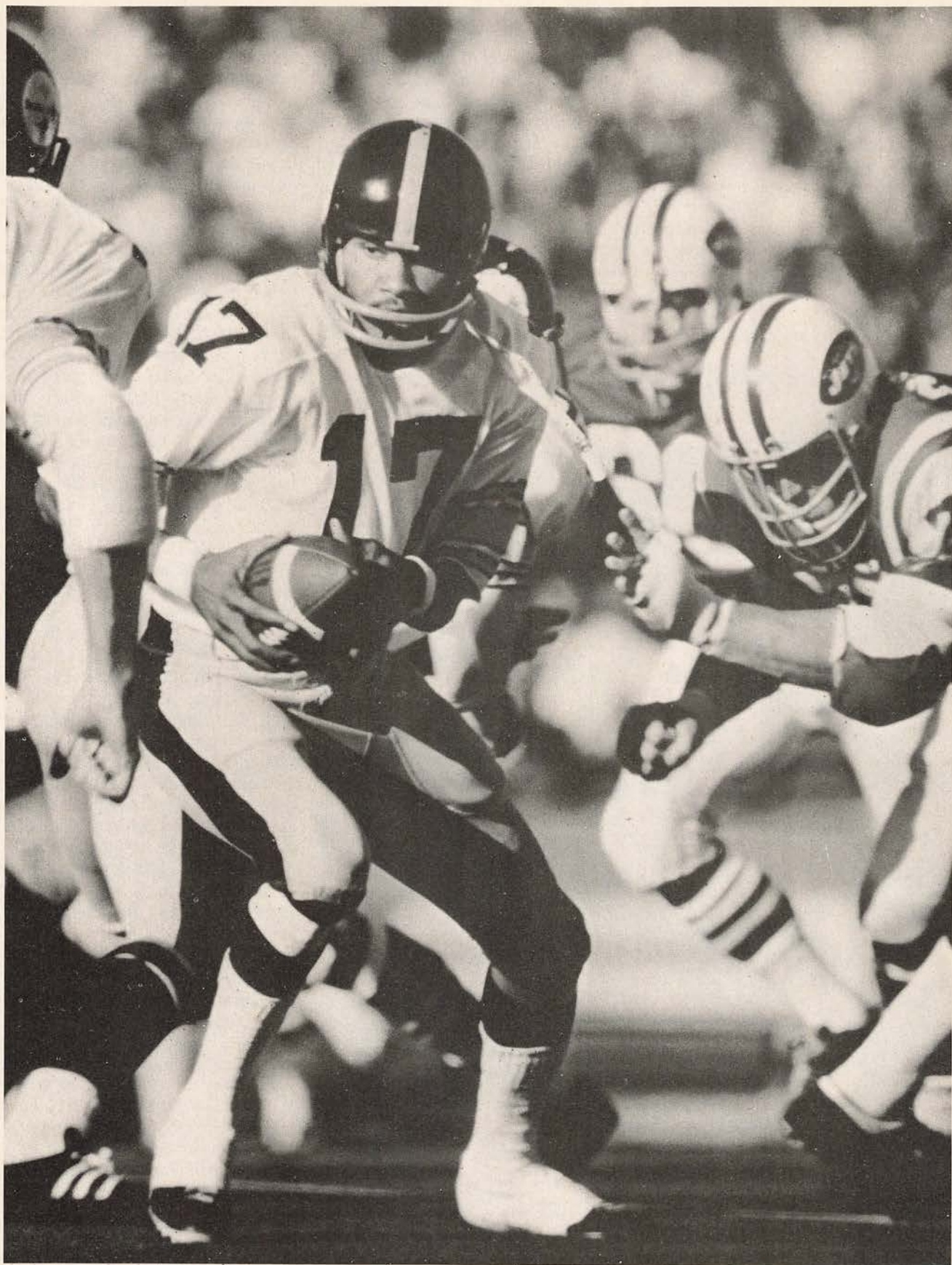
The Epsteins moved to the West Coast, and Mike went to the Uni- versity of California at Berkeley, where he became starting fullback on Craig Morton's Cal team, in Mike's sophomore season. He beat out three upperclassmen for the job. He wound up Cal's second leading ground gainer. He was fast enough, a 10.2 man in the 100. In summers, he operated a jackhammer, or he slung carcasses around a meatpacking plant, or he hefted sacks of sand for an oil-rig outfit. He played baseball as well as football, and when Cal decided to de-emphasize football, Epstein dropped it. "When I put my mind to something, it is all or nothing. Football couldn't be all, in a de- emphasized program."

He majored in social psychol- ogy, intending to become a lawyer. "I figured knowing people better would make me a good lawyer."

But a couple of seasons hitting around .380, plus a trip to Japan and Korea in 1964 with a college All-America squad which he led in hitting, brought the Baltimore or- ganization to his door, with a fat bonus. The signing was big news in the Bay (Continued on page 86)



By the end of August Epstein was hit- ting 37 points over his 1971 average— and helping out with aggressive defense.





THE TRIALS OF A ROOKIE QUARTERBACK

[Who Happens To Be Black]



Joe Gilliam, a highly touted passer but late draft choice, was up against tough competition in Pittsburgh's training camp. And he had to face other heavy problems

BY PHIL MUSICK

On July 12, Joe Gilliam, rookie quarterback, reported to the Pittsburgh Steelers training camp. Joe Gilliam, *black* rookie quarterback. An anomaly, as it were. A surfer in the Sahara; Dayan at an Arab League picnic; Woody Allen at Muscle Beach; a poker player with a facial tic. You get the message.

There are, of course, no such things as black quarterbacks; only figments of the liberal imagination. Somewhere on their way to the pocket—poof!—they become defensive backs, flankers, pulling guards, automobile mechanics, insurance salesmen. The prototype black quarterback was Choo-Choo Charlie Brackins, who is best remembered for not having played the position for Green Bay in 1955. There have been several since, all converted to their rightful place in the natural scheme of things, among them Eldridge Dickey. This year there are four, none of them competing for a No. 1 spot. James Harris made it at Buffalo—does anyone ever really make it in Buffalo? John Walton is with Los Angeles, Karl Douglas is with Baltimore and then there's Gil-

liam. Joe Gilliam knows all about Dickey, his predecessor at Tennessee State. He shakes his head when he thinks about Dickey getting only a cursory look at Oakland as a quarterback.

"Dickey was the best I ever saw. He had as much talent as Terry Bradshaw," he says. "I can't understand why he didn't make it. Dickey is so talented. So..."

So black he could not survive the National Football League stereotype that has resulted in only a rare black playing quarterback or center or middle linebacker, the "thinking" positions? So it is that Gilliam often thinks about his buddy, Eldridge Dickey, the noted pass receiver.

But, despite history, the color of his skin is the least of Gilliam's worries as training camp opens. The competition he faces is established and experienced. Behind the Steeler regular Bradshaw, the man with the golden arm, are Terry Hanratty, the ex-Notre Dame All-America, and Bob Leahy, a steady cab squad veteran. Two quarterbacks will make the roster, one will make the taxi squad, one will make the unemployment office. Gilliam tries to forget about the color of his skin.

"They're all the same . . . lazy," I remember hearing a Steeler assistant coach blurt in a moment of bitter frustration. "No, damn, I don't mean that . . . but some of them are." Can you dig what that line of reasoning can mean to the making, or unmaking, of Joe Gilliam? Gilliam can dig it. Humorously: "I'm not going to wake up tomorrow white." Emotionally: "I don't know how the players feel, man!" Intellectually: "If I go around thinking 'I'm a black quarterback,' I will misinterpret people, attitudes, occurrences." Rationally: "What can I do about it?" Hopefully: "I hope they accept me."

Yeah, Joe Gilliam can dig it, but he correctly senses he will not be judged by his color. Not because he purposely stumbled to a slow 5.0 clocking for 40 yards—to prevent being switched to another position, nor because he is too light to play another position, but because of two men, Art Rooney and Chuck Noll. Rooney owns the Steelers and for 39 years he has treated them as he would have an affectionate but not-quite-bright child.

Held together by a common bond, suffering, the franchise has become (Continued on page 116)

In his first exhibition, against the Jets, Gilliam fumbled once but impressed his coaches by standing firm against a blitz.

A mob—actually a mini-mob composed of security officers—is jamming the clubhouse of posh, elegant Westchester Country Club. At least ten plain-clothes policemen and one uniformed officer are trying to seal off Jack Nicklaus, who has just won 50 grand for hitting a golfball 270 times. One cop is getting damned upset now about the breach of security. He is being goaded by Sam, who runs the clubhouse. Or did. At the moment, nobody is running it.

One of the cops is leaning on Nicklaus for an autograph. Another is waiting to have his picture made with Jack. Still another is delivering a how-great-thou-art oratory to the 1972 Westchester Classic winner.

"For chrissakes, Pete, can't you keep some of these people out of here? Are you working, or what?" cries Sam. "C'mon, let him relax. Get 'em outta here."

"AWWWWright, let's go! Clear it out! Everybody! EVERYBODY! You, fella," says the cop, pointing at a writer, "let's move it. I don't care who you work for, let's move it. Either you leave or we'll t'row you out."

Jack Nicklaus, surrounded by cops, has his clothes half off en route to a shower and a 9:15 flight at LaGuardia Airport. The scene becomes increasingly chaotic and the unflappable Nicklaus begins mum-

bling to himself, "Let's see, I've got to get organized here now."

For the third time an off-duty cop with martini breath thrusts a picture and a felt tip pen in front of Nicklaus. "C'mon Jack, sign for me. I've been your fan 30 years."

"I told you," bristles Nicklaus, who has just run a gauntlet of autograph seekers to the clubhouse, "that I'll be glad to sign them all as soon as I'm done here."

"C'mon, Pete, for chrissakes," pleads Sam.

Now Pete squares off with martini breath and the two of them are in a shouting match.

It all reaches a zenith of absurdity now. Nicklaus walks away from his locker in semi-disgust. In a moment, he is back, reaching for a protective gray cover to slide over his golf bag. His caddy, John, is holding the bag. Martini breath reaches over for the cover.

"I want to help Jack here," he announces to his friends. "Here, Jack, let me help you."

"Please! I don't need your help!"

Lesser men would have swung their way out of that scene with a 3-wood. With incredible cool that only a Nicklaus could possess, Jack left them happy. He dispensed two dozen new golf balls still in the box to be divided among "the boys." He tipped Sam. He signed all the autographs, including the one for martini breath. And then he had to get

a check from wife Barbara to pay his caddy.

On a North Palm Beach (Florida) baseball diamond, Jack Nicklaus fields a ground ball at first base. It is one of those father-son sandlot games and Nicklaus notices the runner at third base breaking for home. With the instincts of the baseball player he was as a boy, Jack runs toward him with the ball, hoping to trap the runner in a run-down.

He is barefoot, a fact he remembers when his right big toe thuds against a sprinkler head. There is a time out and Jack Nicklaus is sitting on the grass, perusing his bloody, stubbed toe.

"Mr. Nicklaus!" says one of the youngsters. "Look! A piece of your toe is still on the sprinkler."

Jack suggests the boy hand him the piece of skin, that perhaps he can graft it back on with a band-aid.

"Are you kidding?" says the boy. "I'm keeping this for a souvenir."

Everybody, it seems, wants a piece of Jack Nicklaus these days.

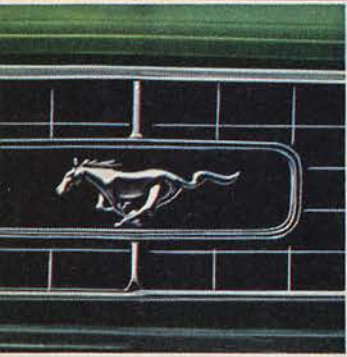
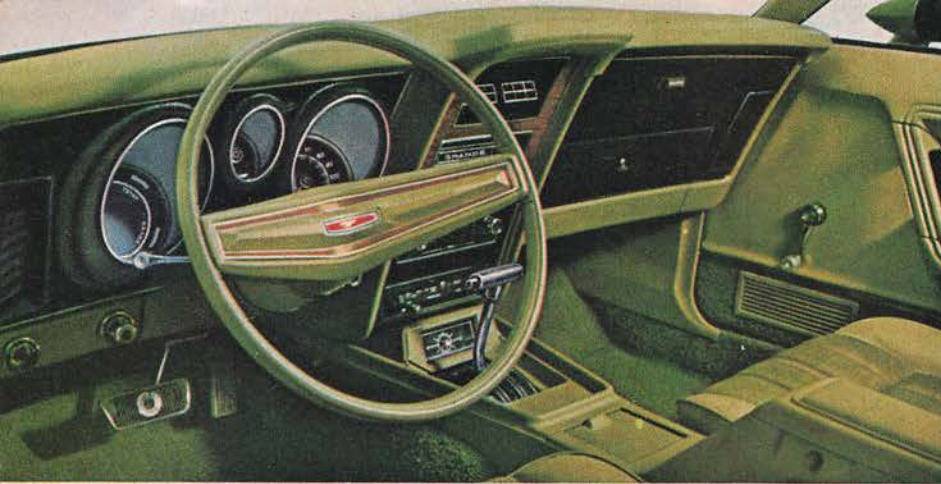
I first began to pay close attention to Jack Nicklaus after the third round of the 1971 PGA in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. He was leading the field, on his way to victory, but he had stopped in the press tent (*Continued on page 126*)

Jack's Pack is not only turned on by his golfing but
also by his new mod style

At Last, Jack Nicklaus Has A Gallery

BY BUDDY MARTIN





Hardtop



Convertible



SportsRoof



What makes Mustang different is the

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FORD MUSTANG

FORD DIVISION 

A Gallery of RUFFIANS, FLAKES & ODDBALLS



...Who have played pro football, in one fashion or another

BY PAUL ZIMMERMAN

I think of Larry Eisenhower, the former defensive end for the Boston Patriots, and I wonder whether old Dutch still made the trips at the end of Larry's career. Dutch is Larry's father, a crew-cut 6-3, 275-pounder who used to raise hell for the Long Island Aggies in Farmingdale.

When the Patriots played San Diego, they would stay at a place called the Stardust Motel. The big feature of the Stardust was the Mermaid Bar. The drinkers would drink and look at four young water ballerinas performing in front of them in a glass pool. One hot night Larry's dad felt like a swim.

"Where's the pool, Larry," old Dutch said, and of course Larry steered him over to the Mermaid.

"It almost made me swear off booze for life," a writer said. "There I was having a nice quiet drink, and all of a sudden this goddamn whale in a blue woolen bathing suit was swimming right at me."

"How was your swim, Dad?" Eisenhower wanted to know after Dutch got through with his show.

"OK, Larry, but I got the damndest feeling that there were a whole lot of eyes on me."

Life would be indeed dull if America's football players rolled off the assembly line saying,

Former New York Jet George Sauer said of Looney, here running for Washington: "Never was a man more aptly named."

"Yessir," and "Nosir," and "Gee, I think all the credit belongs to my teammates, sir." People like Eisenhower and Alex Hawkins ("I went to high school in Charlestown, West Virginia, and I'd get myself ready for the big game by playing solitaire, having a chew of tobacco, and listening to Webb Pierce sing, 'I'm in the Jailhouse Now'") made things interesting. Yes, even the Joe Don Looneys, who bring you into another dimension.

Looney's dossier reads like an old Henry Aldrich script. By the time he got to the University of Oklahoma he had logged time at Texas, TCU, and Cameron JC in Lawton, Oklahoma. He was called at Oklahoma for slugging a student assistant coach, and then came the pinball trip through the pros—New York to Baltimore to Detroit to Washington to the Army to New Orleans, all within six years.

Before his senior year at Oklahoma, he had spent a summer in a Baton Rouge, Louisiana, health studio. He was 6-1, 224, when he left. He could run the hundred in 9.8, lift 290 pounds in a military press, 450 in a squat. He drank a gallon of milk a day and swallowed 20 different kinds of protein pills.

"Have you considered his attitude?" someone asked owner Wellington Mara after the Giants drafted him No. 1 in December, 1963. "I have considered those shoulders, those legs, and those 224 pounds," Mara said.

He lasted with the Giants for 28 days. People remember him punching and flailing at Allie Sherman's recoil-blocking dummies. Equipment manager Sid Moret says that Looney wouldn't throw his used socks and jock into a bin so marked, because, "No damn sign is going to tell me what to do."

Practices bored him and he preferred playing catch with a nine-year-old boy on the sidelines. In scrimmages he ran the seven-hole when he was supposed to run the five-hole. "Anyone can run where the holes are," he said. "A good

football player makes his own holes."

He wouldn't have his ankles taped (\$50 fine); he was late to meetings (\$50); he missed bed check (\$50). "Finally," publicist Don Smith said, "he owed us so much in fines that he couldn't afford to play for us."

"It's not fair," he said, when he missed the 11 p.m. bed check by ten minutes. "The night before, I was in bed at 10. They still owe me 50 minutes."

In August he was traded to Baltimore, and after a few workouts the Colt coaches said his attitude was 100 percent improved. He scored a touchdown on a 58-yard run against the Bears and came off the field in tears. Joe Don was ready to blossom.

Then in November he broke down a door and slugged the male member of one of two young married couples cowering in the hallway. It was all a big mix-up, he said at the trial. He and his buddy were looking for the apartment of some nurses, and besides that, he was pretty upset because Barry Goldwater had gotten beaten so badly in the Presidential election.

And when Looney's lawyer, William D. MacMillan, suggested probation before the verdict, he gave the world a definitive appraisal of his man: "This verdict would keep the two couples from having a feeling that Looney might develop a 'persecution complex,' over the matter, and the two other couples would not have a future fear of Looney retaliating against them."

A week later Looney jumped into the ring during a tag team wrestling bout involving Red Berry and Bruno Sammartino in the Civic Center and helped quell what he figured was a riot. Promoter Phil Zacko thanked Joe Don for protecting his wrestlers. "He should be commended," the promoter said.

Baltimore coach Don Shula couldn't see it that way, and before the next camp opened, Looney (*Continued on page 48*)

FOR BILLY CUNNINGHAM, NOTHIN' COULD BE FINAH

Since the courts ruled that the ex-NBA star must play for the ABA Cougars, it's been like coming home
BY CHARLEY ROSEN

Soon after I arrived at my hotel in Greensboro, North Carolina, I saw the sign in the lobby: "Welcome North Carolina High School Coaches." And sure enough there they were—legions of bull-necked, red-eyed, crew-cuts swarming all over the lobby. Their alligator embossed Banlon shirts bulged at the chest and shoulders or (for the majority who had been once or twice around the track) around the belly.

I tried to stand inconspicuously behind an ersatz palm tree, attempting to make believe my long hair and six feet eight inches came with the flabby naugahide furniture. But two natives approached me.

"Hey, boy, where you from?" one asked.

"New York."

"Hmmm," he said, which I translated as, "A yankee." The other one, with "Staff" marked on his T-shirt like five stars on a general's shoulder, came even closer.

"Hey, boy, you want a scholarship to play basketball?"

"I'd really dig it, but I graduated ten years ago."

"That's alright, boy, nobody knows you down here."

Southern hospitality in basketball circles has long included the precept that all large bodies, especially those of New York players, are for sale.

Billy Cunningham inhabits one of

those bodies. While he doesn't speak hound-dawg, Billy's speech also doesn't sound like it did in Brooklyn, where he was born. He has adopted other Southern habits, such as leaving his Cadillac unlocked in the hotel parking lot. "Sometimes," he says, "I leave my keys in the car." Billy may have to register as an alien the next time he goes home.

Home is Brooklyn, the still lamented Dodgers, kick-the-can, mug-the-old-lady—but most of all Brooklyn is basketball in the schoolyard. Harlem is the showcase, but Brooklyn is where they all learned what to do. Connie Hawkins is the legend. The Hawk, says Dave Wolf in his book *Foul!*, is the greatest schoolyard ballplayer who ever laced on a pair of Converse sneakers. Well, Cunningham doesn't wear Cons and a strong case can be made that Billy is better than the Hawk in any schoolyard in the country. Sure the Hawk flashes in on the hoop and makes ten moves before he jams the ball home—but Cunningham does the same thing more effectively, more often and with less wasted motion. Hawkins plays to the crowd, Cunningham plays to win. Instead of the one-on-one contest they put on last year, Vitalis should have staged a Hawkins-Cunningham game and saved themselves some money, embarrassment and much criticism. And the game should have been played in Brooklyn's Manhattan Beach.

But Greensboro, North Carolina, is where Billy Cunningham lives now, and where he will continue to live for at least the three-year duration of his contract with the Carolina Cougars of the American Basketball Association.

Larry Brown is Billy's new coach and old college teammate. This is Larry's first head coaching job in

the pros, and two months before the season started he already had bags under his eyes. He moves languidly and gracefully, but you can tell that he's quick enough to jump up and snatch a fly out of the air.

Larry is an idealist who can actually look you dead in the eye and say something like: "If my guards won't run or get the ball inside, then I'll find some people who will." But he's also a tough little guy who's been around the ABA map for five years.

"People here are excited about Billy's arrival," he says. "They couldn't believe that he had jumped from the Philadelphia 76ers of the NBA until we held a press conference in June. Ticket sales have jumped too."

So the folks in Greensboro have shown the size of their hearts by accepting a wayward Yankee back into the fold. Having a winning basketball team is merely a throw-in on the deal.

Today, Billy was on a tight schedule. He was in town for two days to try and find a house where he, his wife Sondra, who originally comes from Greensboro, and his three-year-old daughter Stephanie could live during the season. Between running hither and yon, we managed to share a couple of steaks in the hotel restaurant. I could tell Billy was serious about playing with the Cougars since he avoided potatoes and bread in favor of a beer or two.

But his weight is good. I haven't seen him so thin since he was playing in Erasmus High School. He dresses in golf course casual, with a turtle, not an alligator, livening his shirt. "I love it here," he says. "I went (Continued on page 122)

According to former teammate Wali Jones, Cunningham "plays like a brother. You can't predict what he's going to do."

THAN TO BE IN CAROLINA...



But the big kids couldn't catch Greg Pruitt. That's why he averaged nearly ten yards a carry for Oklahoma last year

BY NICK SEITZ

Selecting Greg Pruitt's most amazing run is a challenge equal to determining which is Raquel Welch's best side. As a junior last year he established himself as college football's most exciting player by hurtling for gains of 30 or more yards 13 times, including bolts of 64, 66 and 75 yards. As Texas coach Darrell Royal says, Pruitt always seems to be running downhill.

The brash little Oklahoma right halfback made one carry, though, that long will be a conversation piece in a state where football is king—and queen and jack, too. It came against Southern California and was, in the stunned words of Trojan coach John McKay (who coached O. J. Simpson): “the damndest thing I ever saw.” With the ball at the Southern Cal 42-yard line, Pruitt swung out quickly to his left, admired quarterback Jack Mildren's faking on the first two legs of the triple option, and then fielded Mildren's long pitchout in high gear. He raced toward the left sideline and got a first down before he was hemmed in at the Trojan 30. Suddenly he shot straight right

in mid-stride and jetted his way through the bewildered Trojan secondary to score. “He was stopped cold . . . I didn't believe it,” sighed McKay.

“I kind of jumped and turned around in the air,” Pruitt explained sometime later. “I don't know how I do that stuff. As some great runner once said, I just follow my feet. One time I juggled the ball halfway through a run and dribbled it behind my back like a Harlem Globetrotter. I look at game films later and I'm surprised that I escaped. It's like I'm watching somebody else.”

A consensus All-America, Pruitt escaped so often last season that he broke Gale Sayers' Big Eight Conference one-year rushing record with 1165 yards and set four school records, one his astonishing average of 9.41 yards per carry. The Associated Press named him national back of the week twice in a row, after he decimated Southern Cal and Texas, and no one could remember that happening before. He consistently picked up pocket money by betting his teammates that he would do something ridiculously impressive—say gain 200 yards—and saying it was nothing more than they should expect of the best back in the nation.

Pruitt entered the 1972 season as the leading returning college rusher and Heisman Trophy vote-getter, clearly primed to follow the departed Pat Sullivan as the college game's top player. Or is he? In the inner sanctums of college football it is whispered that the departure through graduation of Oklahoma quarterback Mildren will sharply reduce Pruitt's explosiveness. In last

month's *SPORT*, the redoubtable Beano Cook climbed out on a limb, which isn't easy for a man of Beano's construction, and selected Pruitt no better than second team on his preseason All-America. Second team for a ballcarrier who is eclipsing such Oklahoma legends as Billy Vessels, Tommy McDonald and Steve Owens? Who one Big Eight coach says is better than Gale Sayers? Who can all but out-talk his hero Muhammad Ali?

Beano and others reason that, without Mildren's adroit ballhandling, underrated passing and inside keeper runs, Pruitt will not be able to find outside running room; opposing defenses will stack everybody but the school mascot and Civil War cannon around end, which is where he prefers to operate, and, they say, he's not big enough to run well inside. Pruitt and the Oklahoma Wishbone-T took people by surprise last year, the rationale continues, and this time around the defenses will not be caught with their hip pads down giving up all those long hello-goodbye waterbug runs, not in the Big Eight, the toughest league in the country.

Can Pruitt repeat his flashy statistics, perhaps even become the first college player to gain 2000 yards in a season? And if not, then what will he do this season? Perhaps his last performance as a junior—the Sugar Bowl game between Oklahoma and Auburn—provides an indication of what's to come.

I met Pruitt after an early breakfast meeting the day before the game. He was wearing the special practice T-shirt given him by offensive coach Barry Switzer, with “HELLO” (Continued on page 112)

“MOM WAS AFRAID I'D GET KILLED PLAYING WITH THE BIG KIDS”





AL OLIVER: "I Should Be Batting .400"

The Pirate centerfielder expects a lot from himself...and management, and fans, and sportswriters

BY TOM DOWLING

"When I'm hitting there's none better," says Al Oliver from the wheel of his new two-tone tan Lincoln, a car said to radiate quiet elegance. "There's no one stronger than me in the league. I'm always going to get a lot of hits. I will always hit the ball better than your average Joe ball-player."

Oliver chatters on engagingly, climbing up the road for that part

of the Pittsburgh black ghetto known as the Hill District, where Pirate teammate Willie Stargell maintains a fried chicken hut. Oliver wears his hair cropped short and is dressed in quiet, if well tailored, brown slacks and shirt. He has just come from a routine X-ray at the doctor's office and reports that "everything's in order." That, as Oliver sees it these days, is a reversal of form, a departure from his routine with Pirates in these last four years. Oliver looks conservative and restrained, but he doesn't sound that way.

"The atom ball," he says, "that's what I hit. It just explodes off my bat and that's the secret of being a good hitter. I mean really, you look at all the line drives I hit I should be batting .400. More of those balls should be dropping in.

But I don't get the luck, just like I never get the publicity I deserve. Sportswriters have a thing against me. Like when the Pirates platooned me the last couple of years, the sportswriters just wrote: 'Al Oliver wants to play every day.' What they should have written was: 'Al Oliver *can* and *ought* to play every day.' Do you see them writing I should be hitting .400? No, sportswriters never put it that way."

The words come out of Oliver's mouth the way a baseball leaves his bat—hard and crisp to all fields. But hitting and talking share a common deviation from the ideal. Both disciplines, as Oliver notes, are subject to chance; not all line drives drop in for hits, neither do all quotes go for extra bases, especially when they appear in cold newspaper print. Certainly, when set in type, Oliver's estimates of his own abilities appear, shall we say, cocky, perhaps even insufferably so. Yet, when you hear Oliver pronounce those judgments on himself you are left with the impression of a man grappling to sum himself up with as much detachment as he can muster.

With words, as with baseballs, the Pirate centerfielder makes contact, and that's the rub. The fans thrill to the sharp crack of a bat striking a ball at home plate, an act of aggressive ego if ever there was one. But the fans are pained when the same assertive sound emanates from the clubhouse, where self-effacing mush is *de rigueur*. This is the central dichotomy of sports, a curious *métier* whose practitioners are expected to challenge the opposition with all the swagger and combativeness at their command and say, "Aw shucks, I was just plain lucky," or "I'm just a spoke in the wheel" when the game is over.

What is very obvious about Al Oliver is that he has yet to master the Jekyll and Hyde personality requirements the fans demand of their sports heroes. As a result Oliver wears the public image of the

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(Continued from page 63)

much as he wants.

But that weakness down the middle should keep Houston from doing any real damage in the Central Division.

The Midwest Division

Milwaukee: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is awesome and getting stronger all the time. With Larry Costello's proven ability to keep his team together, if they surround Abdul-Jabbar with adequate personnel they should win it again. Russell Lee of Marshall University, their first-round draft choice, should more than offset the loss of John Block. Bob Dandridge, Lee and Curtis Perry in the corners should be adequate, plus anyone GM Wayne Embry may pick up to give any of these men a breather.

In the backcourt, Oscar Robertson, Lucius Allen, Jon McGlocklin and Wally Jones are plenty good. Oscar, of course, is no kid anymore and he will pick the spots where he wants to really shine. Day in and day out, the Bucks have to have complete efforts out of Allen and Jones to be a consistent winner and I think the two guards will produce. As a result, I have to go along with Milwaukee again even though they play in a very tough division.

Chicago: The Bulls could very well push Milwaukee for the division title. They are rated No. 1 defensively, having allowed only 102 points per game last season, but that is not a true indication of their defense. Other teams cannot score as much due to the deliberate style of play Chicago utilizes. You really can't say they are the best defensive team although they certainly have an excellent defense.

With a healthy Tom Boerwinkle and a rapidly improving backup center in Cliff Ray, they will be more than adequate in the middle.

In the corners a lot depends on Chet Walker, who has been around, and Bob Love, their scoring forward. Their bench strength in the corners is only fair. Their backcourt of Bob Weiss, Jim King, Norm Van Lier and Jerry Sloan is as good as there is day in and day out. They can score, they can play defense and they hustle very well. Also, coach Dick Motta knows how to get the most out of them.

I would say that if there is any weakness on Chicago's team, it is in the corners where both Walker and

Love are susceptible to injury. But overall they are very strong.

Detroit: The Pistons are a very unusual ballclub. They have always had injury problems—last year Dave Bing had a detached retina, and the year before Bob Lanier had knee miseries. They also had too much of the same playing style with Bing and Walker both in the backcourt: You can only play this game with one ball.

Lanier won the one-on-one title last year and proved to everyone including himself that he can score when and if he decides to go to the hoop or from the outside. He's just a fine offensive ballplayer. He's big and strong and no one pushes him around, and he may well come into his own this year.

With Bing and Stu Lantz in the backcourt, plus rookies Bob Nash from Hawaii (who may surprise his critics) and Chris Ford of Villanova, they are also going to be strong overall. In addition to Nash, the Pistons will have Curtis Rowe, Fred Foster (from Philadelphia), Erwin Mueller, Willie Norwood and Jim Davis. This gives them plenty of talent up front. If Bing doesn't get tired and doesn't get hurt and with a little more help in the backcourt (Ford is important to their future plans), they are going to be competitive.

Coach Earl Lloyd will be in his second season and, I believe, being the intelligent fellow that he is, he will shake off all of the rookie mistakes coaches are liable to make and be much more help to his team this year.

Kansas City: My friend Cooz is in for a long year. There are very few people, in my humble opinion, who actually do a better job than Bob Cousy with what material they have. But you still have to have horses to go somewhere.

So much on this club depends on Nate Archibald. He has to get between 40 and 50 points for them to be in a lot of games. With John Mengelt in the backcourt along with Tom Van Arsdale and Ken Durette, the team could be very tough on the backline.

Down the middle there's still a problem. I don't think Sam Lacey can handle it by himself; Jim Fox is adequate with him, but together they will be nothing *more* than adequate. They won't overpower anyone. They are going to have to win games by

running all the time.

Also, Cousy's corners are not that strong because they won't be that big, especially if he uses either Van Arsdale or Durette there along with Nate Williams. And I feel that Johnny Green is just a little too old to be of real value to this ballclub.

But, knowing Cousy, I think he will pick somebody up and strengthen his front line. If he doesn't, he'll have problems making the playoffs.

The Pacific Division

Golden State: A lot of teams are making a lot of noise in the Pacific Division, acquiring this player and that, but I feel that Golden State finally has come of age and has championship potential.

If the Warriors got Rick Barry back (and as of this writing Rick says they will not) they would have Nate Thurmond up front along with Joe Ellis, Cazzie Russell and Clyde Lee, and could do it all. But even without Barry, they're strong.

In the backcourt, Jeff Mullins, Jim Barnett and Ron Williams will certainly hold their own against divisional opposition, and Mullins may well have moved into the superstar category.

This team could very easily dethrone Los Angeles. Coach Al Attles is a soft-spoken, thoroughly respected man who has done an excellent job keeping together a group of guys who enjoy playing for him. This year could well be theirs.

Los Angeles: The Lakers have increased their scoring potential by drafting and signing the prolific scorer Travis Grant from Kentucky State, and he could add some strength.

But now that they have won all the marbles, there is the danger of thinking that they can lay back and still win again. It is true that they may be almost impossible to beat in a playoff situation, but to finish first in their division Jerry West and Gail Goodrich must play the same caliber of explosive basketball they played last year. And it won't be easy, for West and Goodrich had a super season. It's hard to believe they'll be able to duplicate it over 82-games, two consecutive years.

As a result, I look for a little bit of a breakdown, although if anyone in the NBA can hold a situation together, Bill Sharman can. He comes on soft and is probably the best mo-

tivating coach today. But he will miss K.C. Jones who left for a head coaching position at San Diego of the American Basketball Association.

Still, Sharman understands all of the problems. Certainly most people expect L.A. to win the division title, but I feel that Golden State can edge them in a tight tough race.

Phoenix: The Suns have a great amount of individual talent, maybe enough to make the playoffs. New coach Butch van Breda Kolff knows the league and will help, but it will take time for him to adjust and his players to adjust to him.

In the backcourt, the acquisition of Charlie Scott, a superstar and a great scorer, is going to give them a tremendous added offensive punch. Take him, along with Clem Haskins, Dick Van Arsdale, a good sparkplug in Mo Layton, plus Corky Calhoun—who I feel will be a good steady ball-player—and you have power.

However, with Neal Walk and Mel Counts in the middle, Phoenix will need help from the corners. Connie Hawkins is, of course, fabulous on offense—we all know that—but if Gus Johnson can't regain his top defensive form, the Suns will be in trouble. If Johnson is able to make a complete comeback, then I think it is going to be a very close race between Phoenix and Seattle for the third spot.

Seattle: It is almost impossible to separate Seattle and Phoenix at this point because there are so many ifs involved with both teams.

Seattle has to get help from Jim McDaniels. I know that Spencer Haywood is a full-fledged superstar and a great player, but I think obtaining Butch Beard for Lenny Wilkens will weaken them, both on offense and defense. The acquisition of Bud Stallworth (from the U. of Kansas) may take some of the pressure off, but it is a very difficult task to fill the shoes of a Lenny Wilkens.

Their frontcourt, with Don Kojis, Don Smith, McDaniels and Garfield Heard is already very strong. And I don't think that the addition of ABA star John Brisker—if it happens—will make an appreciable difference. After all the complications of Brisker's contractual scene are ironed out, Seattle will have had to part with two good forwards as payment.

Their center situation is up in the air and it is difficult to believe that



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CHARCOAL
MELLOWED



BY DROP

McDaniels will be able to do the job against the real power centers. Haywood may have to be used in the middle which will tend to wear him down and limit his effectiveness on offense.

The Sonics have a new coach in Tom Nissalke, which means a new system and perhaps some time in getting together, and that too could effect their chances of making the playoffs. Without Lenny Wilkens, I have to give Phoenix the edge.

Portland: The Trail Blazers have a good ballclub. I feel that in most other divisions they would be contenders. The acquisition of rookie Larue Martin at center might give them the strength down the middle they are looking for. But he will be a rookie, and I don't think he will set the league afire in his first year. Nor does he have the weight to go behind his jumping and running ability.

Up front, a great deal depends on Geoff Petrie having the year he had two years ago, before he was injured. Sidney Wicks is now an authentic superstar, Rick Adelman and Stan McKenzie are fine guards. But whether Martin can make the big difference remains to be seen.

New coach Jack McClosky will have some professional assistance from Neil Johnson, but the transition figures to be too tough in the first year for the Trail Blazers to be in a contending position.

As I have mentioned, the "first season" is a long one and the competition is getting tougher all the time. Injuries play a prominent part in all sports, especially basketball where you are only playing five men and an injury to a key man could be the difference between winning and losing. All of these predictions and prognostications are, naturally, predicated on no one suffering crippling injuries.

So, you have the first season. The second season is a different story. I've got to go along with the Lakers for the playoff situation. In fact, they should win the NBA championship if they survive the early rounds of their own division. I think they will.

In the East, the Celtics will be the team to reckon with, for the simple reason that many of Boston's key men who had never played in a playoff before 1972 now have experience and can adjust more quickly to this, the ultimate challenge. ■

(Continued from page 69)

area. Across the top of the first page of the November 5, 1964, *Oakland Tribune*, ran the headline: "ORIOLES SIGN UC'S MIKE EPSTEIN." Epstein won't say how fat the bonus was, but the Dodgers offered him \$35,000 and he turned it down. Estimates peg it at \$50,000.

Still, the question persists, Jewish boys become doctors, college professors, lawyers. How come *baseball*? Incipient mountain man Mike Epstein saw it as another peak to be climbed. It was there.

"I had to prove I could compete in the big leagues. I couldn't go through life not knowing if I could have done it. I would have eaten my heart out every time I saw a box score, if I hadn't tried."

He had to find out.

The Baltimore organization sent him to Stockton of the California League, where his .338 led the league, and so did his 30 home runs. He wound up Rookie-of-the-Year and MVP.

He enjoyed that first season in the bushes. "It was like college again, all us young guys. I took home \$206.62 twice a month. You could live on it. I even liked the bus rides."

He dug Stockton for other reasons. He met a local girl, blonde and beautiful Barbara Gluskin. After the season ended, Mike got a job, ramrodding a 10,000-acre cattle and sheep ranch 30 miles east of Stockton. "I lived in a bunkhouse. All they paid was room and board and friendship. We cooked on a wood-burning stove in the bunkhouse. I'd get a horse and round up the sheep, and I'd get off at 3 o'clock and go see Barbara."

They married on April 30, 1966, and the Baltimore organization gave him a five-day honeymoon before he reported to Rochester in the International League, managed by Earl Weaver.

At first, the jump seemed too much. "I was off to a bad start. I was bedazzled by Triple-A pitching. Then Earl Weaver said, 'Don't worry. You are the leader. I'm not sending you down.'"

Epstein responded, leading the league in home runs and runs batted in. A scouting report on Epstein after the 1966 season reads like a press agent puff: "Came along fast. Has improved tremendously. Big, active, strong. Excellent power—a really top ballplayer even now. Can

do everything around the bag. Can be a sensation."

He couldn't miss?

He missed.

The Orioles in 1967 had Boog Powell on first, fresh off a 34-home-run season. They tried Epstein in the outfield, but it didn't take. Epstein rode the bench. He moped. "I thought if Baltimore couldn't use me, somebody could. I could have been traded, but Baltimore wanted to have their cake and eat it, too. Then they said they were going to send me down to the minors, so I could play regularly. I said, 'Hey, just trade me.'"

But they didn't trade Epstein, not just yet, so he decided to quit baseball. "I wasn't all that young. I was 24. I figured I was wasting time. I could go out on my own. Life wasn't worth it. I was earning \$8000. I went home and stayed home three weeks."

Baltimore got the message. On May 29, he was traded with pitcher Frank Bertaina to Washington, for Pete Richert.

He had a couple of indifferent years with the Senators, and then Ted Williams took over the club in 1969. Everything changed. For the better, for the worse. Williams liked Epstein, a couple of outdoorsmen swapping hunting and fishing stories. Williams gave Epstein the benefit of his vast hitting knowledge. He taught him never to swing at the first pitch against a pitcher he'd never seen before. He hammered home that Mike Epstein had a hitting zone, within which he ought to be able to find his pitch. "I owe to Ted Williams," Mike Epstein says today, "the idea of fighting to get a good pitch that I can hit and I can hit hard"

Epstein began to hit his pitch hard in 1969. He blasted 30 home runs, hitting behind Frank Howard. Epstein says, without a note of false modesty, "Frank Howard had his big home run years when I hit behind him. He hit 36, 44, 48 and 44 home runs. The year I left, he dropped down to 26 home runs."

With all the good, it ended up bad. Williams liked Epstein well enough, but he never believed Mike could hit lefthanded pitching. So he platooned him, and Epstein moped some more. Epstein admits some lefthanders gave him trouble, give him trouble still. "But so do some righthanders. When I'm not hitting, any pitcher makes

me look like a horse's ass. The fact is, the past three years—'69, '70, '71—I've hit lefthanders better than righthanders."

Williams would not believe the stats. Says Epstein: "Even in 1969, when I had my best year, I still didn't face lefthanders. The next year I was sure I'd get a chance. I still was platooned. In 1970, the same story. I'd get hot, and then they'd throw a lefthander against us, and I'd sit on the bench and cool off. I sat on the bench more and more. It was discouraging. In another line of work, if you don't get a chance to prove yourself, you can go to another company. Not in baseball."

On certain days you had to believe superstardom was not beyond his grasp. He hit three home runs in a single game, May 16, 1969, against Chicago. He knocked in eight runs one day in 1970, against Baltimore.

But the days were isolated. Epstein began to ask to be traded. On May 8, 1971, in Minnesota, owner Bob Short called Epstein up to his room in the Hotel Leamington (which Short owns).

"You've been traded," Short said.

"Where to?" Epstein asked.

"To Oakland."

Epstein said simply, "Thanks for trading me to a first-class ballclub."

Epstein is happy in Oakland, though he is sophisticated enough to understand the flippety ways of owner Charles O. Finley. Through the All-Star break this year, Oakland had made 40 personnel changes, involving 29 separate players. Says Epstein: "You never know with this organization how long you're going to be around." Withal, Epstein says nice things about Finley. "He's extremely fair. I like him."

The Epsteins quickly bought their hillside house. "I wanted a more rural life, no feeling of hurry up and wait. I wanted a beautiful house overlooking the Bay. I try not to let any restraints get in my way when I want something. I never frustrate myself."

So he bought the house, away from the turmoil of the city itself. Says Barbara Epstein: "We clean out our children's lungs."

Looking back, Epstein thinks he got too involved with the new house. "I was up at 7 a.m. every day. We

fixed the place up. I put in new paneling. I built my daughter a playhouse. I didn't nap in the afternoon. I guess I got run down. I was in a state of fatigue, though I didn't realize it. I've always been a hardworking guy, always trying to improve myself. It never dawned on me I could overtax my body."

He had his split season, a good first half, including a record-tying four home runs in consecutive at-bats on June 15-16, and then the big zero from late July on. Came Thanksgiving, and Mike and Barbara Epstein talked things over. "I decided to give myself another chance. I love playing in Oakland. I figured, 'If I'm lucky enough not to be traded, I'll have a great year.'"

Great years are hard to come by for lifetime .247 hitters. He got off to a slow start in 1972 ("the strike threw me off"), but in early June he found his groove. Home runs came in clusters. He is famous as a streak hitter. He also seems to play better when he gets mad. In a game against Cleveland on June 17, Epstein did not run out a pop fly, and Dick Williams immediately jerked him out

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of the game. Humiliated, Epstein homered the next day, to help Vida Blue win his first game of the season. The next day he went two for two, with four runs batted in. He grumbled about the dimensions and wind currents at the Oakland Coliseum ("the worst hitters' park in the American League") and the next day he hit two monstrous home runs.

He cooled off, and then circumstances conspired to make him conveniently mad again. Oakland picked up Orlando Cepeda, and word reached Epstein that manager Williams intended to play Cepeda against lefthanded pitchers. Epstein was hurt. He aired his lament to the press. He didn't like the idea of being platooned again. Then he took it out on the ball. He went 13-for-20, including seven hits against lefthanders, and nobody could remove him from the lineup. Cepeda made things easier by undergoing surgery for his bum knee. At which time Epstein discovered that Williams had never intended to platoon the two men.

Then Oakland picked up Don Mincher, but this time Williams immediately looked for Epstein and

told him the club just wanted Mincher for bench strength. "Listen," Williams said, "you're my first baseman as long as you can do the job."

A much more serious crisis occurred before the All-Star break. (A minor crisis is that Epstein was not selected on the All-Star squad by Earl Weaver. It is the third year—1969, 1971, 1972—Epstein has carried glittering stats at midseason and has failed to be selected.) On July 18, Epstein hit two home runs off Jim Lonborg, to place him one behind Dick Allen for the league lead. The next day, Epstein singled in the eighth inning of a 3-3 game. Sal Bando bunted, badly, and the throw went to second, to Rick Auerbach, 165 pounds of trusting youth. Epstein flattened the slight youngster, knocking the ball into leftfield. Epstein got up and rumbled into third, where he had to slide again, on his belly. In the process he kicked dirt into his right eye, lodging behind Mike's contact lens. (Epstein is nearsighted.) Epstein stayed in, scored the go-ahead run, and that night, while watching TV in his Milwaukee hotel room, he rubbed the

itching eye until he had rubbed an abrasion onto the eyeball. Infection set in. When he woke on Saturday, July 22, the eye was shut tight. He patched the eye for five days, took antibiotics, and had the eyeball scraped by an eye surgeon every day. He missed nine games and Oakland saw its once comfortable lead begin to evaporate.

Epstein got back in the lineup on August 2, knocking in a run the first day and another run the second day, and though his average dipped to the .270s, he soon found himself back in his power groove. He blasted that TV home run off Jim Palmer, hit another the next day, as Oakland swept the Orioles at Baltimore, and another two days later. He was getting his pitch and hitting it hard.

So that is Mike Epstein, the nice Jewish boy who. . . . "I've never been happier in my life," he says. He sounds like a Schlitz commercial. "You only go around once in life. Life is too short not to enjoy it."

He knows you can't see forever. No matter. He likes what he sees today.

So does Oakland. ■

PITCHING COACHES SELECT BASEBALL'S OUTSTANDING PITCHER

(Continued from page 58)

the Chicago Cubs' Ferguson Jenkins, the Chicago White Sox' Wilbur Wood, Baltimore's Jim Palmer and Dave McNally and, perhaps surprisingly, California's Nolan Ryan. The rest of the pitchers mentioned by the coaches lacked the overall support to be in the Lolich-to-Ryan grouping. These included starters such as Oakland's Vida Blue and Catfish Hunter, Baltimore's Mike Cuellar and Pat Dobson, Detroit's Joe Coleman, Cincinnati's Gary Nolan and New York's Mel Stottlemyre, plus relief pitchers Sparky Lyle of New York, Mike Marshall of Montreal, Tug McGraw of the Mets, Dave Giusti of Pittsburgh and Clay Carroll of Cincinnati.

The low esteem of Vida Blue, last year's American League Cy Young winner, was to be expected off his dismal, half-season showing this year. Indeed, it reflected the value the coaches place on consistency of performance.

"He will have to prove he can have two or three years like the one he had last season before I'd rate him higher," said one coach. "But he has the potential. Vida's not just a flash."

Besides being asked to name the outstanding pitcher, the coaches also were given two theoretical situations: First, pick a pitcher to use in the most crucial game of a season; and, second, if the outcome of the game depended on just one pitch, who would be your pitcher? Four of the 23 coaches would not answer the hypothetical questions, sharing the opinion of Don Osborn who said: "The answer would depend on the actual situations. Some pitchers, no matter how good, are not right for certain spots."

And for the most part, the coaches who answered selected one pitcher for both situations. Houston's Jim Owens, for instance, selected Jenkins as his outstanding pitcher but Seaver as the man for both clutch situations. "If Seaver has to go out there for just one game, he can be damn near unhittable," Owens explained.

On the other hand, San Diego's Roger Craig, who believes Seaver is the best pitcher, named Carlton as his one-game, one-pitch pitcher. "That's because I would pick the man who is the hottest," Craig said. "And right now, in late summer of

1972, Carlton is in the groove. If you asked me a month from now, I might say someone else."

Milwaukee's Wes Stock and California's Tom Morgan both selected Lolich as their one-game pitcher but differed on their clutch choices.

"I'd probably take Wilbur Wood for one pitch because of the difficulty the hitters have swinging at his knuckleball," said Stock.

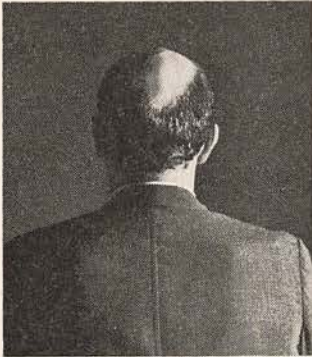
Morgan chose his own Nolan Ryan. "If Ryan got that one pitch over with the stuff he has, no one would touch him," Morgan said.

Some of the coaches picked relief pitchers for the one pitch situation, but no one reliever transcended the rest as did Joe Page and Roy Face in their primes.

Some general conclusions also can be drawn from the survey. Pitchers are getting better instruction than ever before and as a result more good young pitchers are reaching the majors sooner. "It used to be that pitchers spent maybe ten years in the minors and did not reach the majors until they were 27 or 28," said St. Louis' Barney Schultz. "But now the player is moved up quicker because

We asked people* if they would stop
and help if you had tire trouble.

Here's what they said:



"No. I keep my
nose out of other
people's business."



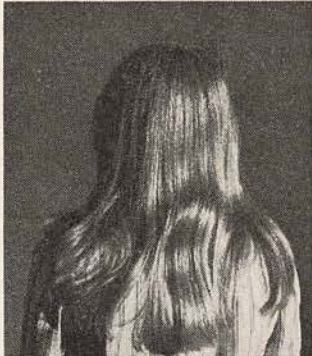
"No... because I'm
afraid. Maybe, if it's
a woman all alone."



No. Why should I?"



"No. I just don't.
I'm usually too busy."



"I would not stop for
anyone, period."



"No. I might cause
an accident."

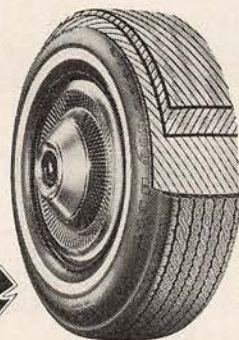


"No. I used to stop,
but not anymore."



"No. I don't really want
to get involved."

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*Interviewed in Albany, N.Y., Atlanta, Ga., Hudson, Ohio, St. Louis, Mo. and Los Angeles, Calif. by independent research firms.



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of instruction."

The coaches also agree that today's pitchers have more of a repertoire and better control than their predecessors. "Once a pitcher had two pitches, a fastball and a curve," said Morgan. "If he had three pitches, he was outstanding. Now, all have three pitches and many have four—fastball, slider, curve and changeup."

Twenty-game winners are more plentiful today, the coaches said, because of the longer schedule, frequent use of relief pitchers to save games, a weaker caliber of hitter and the increased intelligence of all pitchers. "Young pitchers have been more studious than the average young hitter," said Jim Turner of the Yankees.

The coaches also felt there is little difference in the quality of pitchers in the two leagues but that the National League pitchers have to work harder because they face better hitters.

In sum, though, most coaches believe the outstanding pitchers of today are really no different than the outstanding pitchers of the past. "They all have the same quality," said Baltimore's George Bamberger, "whether they were pitching 30-40 years ago or now. The bigger the game, the better the pitcher. When the chips are down, these guys are at their best."

Here, then, are baseball's top pitchers as selected by the pitching coaches:

Mickey Lolich, Detroit, 32, 6-1, 207, lefthander. For a man who is so highly regarded today and who has pitched in the majors for almost a decade, Lolich is a relative newcomer to the pitching elite. Three years ago, in fact, he won just 14 games and led the American League in defeats with 19. He had never won 20 games before 1971 and his career earned run average, though respectable, is not outstanding.

"Lolich always was a good pitcher but he became greater last year," says Jim Turner. "There's no doubt that he's been the best pitcher in baseball for the last two years. But don't overlook the fact that he won three World Series games in 1968. You have to be a good pitcher to do that."

Before his fine 1971 season, when he led the majors with 25 victories and nearly captured the Cy Young Award, Lolich had been eclipsed in Detroit by Denny McLain. With Mc-

Lain's downfall, Lolich became the leader of the Tiger pitching staff.

"Even I didn't realize how good Mickey was until I joined this team last season," said Detroit coach Art Fowler. "He's got a lot of guts and the ability to go with it. He's a complete pitcher, not just a guy having a good year. I compare him to Robin Roberts, who was the best I ever saw in control and pitching knowledge."

Perhaps Lolich's greatest strength is his durability. He led the league in starts (45), complete games (29) and innings pitched (376) in 1971 and was well on his way to duplicating that mark in 1972.

The coaches also rave about Lolich's stamina, competitiveness and aggressiveness.

"He is a bull type pitcher, the type that keeps you in the game and makes you beat him with the bat," said St. Louis' Barney Schultz.

"He goes out there for one reason and that is to win. And he gives 100 percent all the time," said Kansas City's Galen Cisco.

Mickey may not be as fast as some of his rivals but the coaches believe he has as much basic material as anyone. "He has a good fastball and slider and he throws strikes," said Sid Hudson of Texas. "He has better control now than in the past and most of the time he keeps the ball down. Not too many long balls are hit off him."

The coaches also talk of Lolich's intelligence and superior pitching knowledge. "Lolich knows what he is doing with every pitch," said the Angels' Morgan. "When he's in trouble, he can reach back and get a little extra on it. He toys with you until the time comes when he has to bear down and then he does. A lot of fellows coast along and when they get into trouble they can't find their stuff. But not Lolich. He's the best all-around pitcher in the majors today."

Tom Seaver, New York Mets, 27, 6-1, 195, righthander. If the coaches had to pick one man who epitomizes their archetypal pitcher of the Seventies Seaver would be the man. With just one year of minor-league experience, he entered the majors in 1967 at 22 and won 16 games for a tenth-place team. Two years later he led the Mets to the pennant with a 25-7 record that brought him the League's Cy Young Award. At 27, and with an exceptional five year record (95 wins, 54 losses and 2.34 earned run aver-

age) behind him, he is just starting to mature as a pitcher.

Then why didn't the coaches place Seaver in the same class as Lolich? "He's been hurt and hasn't had a good year," said San Francisco's Don McMahon. "If healthy, he's the best pitcher in baseball. Even unhealthy he's better than most."

"He was almost like Koufax before he got hurt," said Pittsburgh's Osborn. "Two years ago he was outstanding. But he's not throwing nearly as well as he did then."

When 1972 started, Seaver seemed on the verge of becoming the Koufax of the era. Last year he had a 20-10 record and a league-leading 1.76 ERA, and in his first two 1972 starts he pitched shutouts. Then he pulled a leg muscle and wasn't the same.

"I still think Seaver is the best righthanded pitcher in baseball," said the Padres' Craig. "When he came up Seaver already had good stuff and good control. Now, he has a great fastball, a great slider and he can throw the ball where he wants to."

"He throws the most correct way of anyone I've seen," added McMahon. "He has velocity, a breaking ball and concentration. He gets everything into his body. If you want to use someone as an example to copy, use Seaver."

Control is probably Seaver's primary asset. The Chicago Cubs' Larry Jansen claims that's mainly why he is such a big winner with a team that does not produce many runs. "He is one of the finest control pitchers I've seen," said Schultz of the Cardinals. "He keeps the ball in the best spot of anyone pitching today."

Some coaches feel Seaver will be even better when he develops a better breaking ball. "I don't think he has that overpowering super stuff as often as he did in the past," said one coach. "He doesn't have a good curve ball. And it's a compliment to him in a sense because he does succeed greatly with a fastball. But if he had a better breaking ball he'd certainly strike out more guys than he does."

But the esteem the coaches have for Seaver is best expressed by Turner of the cross-town Yankees. "Seaver would rate awfully high in a contest for the best young pitcher in baseball," Turner said, "and he probably has his best years still ahead of him."

Bob Gibson, St. Louis, 36, 6-1, 193, righthander. No pitcher of the last decade has been as consistently excel-

lent as Bob Gibson. In earlier years he would have led a similar survey by a wide margin. "Over the last ten years, Bob Gibson has been the best pitcher in baseball," states Craig of San Diego.

The record bears this out. Twice a Cy Young winner (1968 and 1970), Gibson has won 20 games in five of the last seven years. He failed to win 20 games in 1967 and 1971 principally because injuries forced him to miss parts of those seasons. And after losing his first five games in 1972, Gibson suddenly reverted to form, winning 12 straight before being beaten again.

"He is back where he was three years ago," said Houston's Jim Owens. "When I saw him early this year he was not throwing as fast and I thought he was not the same. But the next two times he pitched great games. He is probably the greatest competitor I've seen since I've been in the league."

"Certainly he doesn't have the stuff he used to," said Osborn of Pittsburgh. "But he is still a great competitor and great athlete. He can throw into the strike zone as well as anyone in the league."

"When he gets by the first inning or two and gets a run and has to win for you, he reaches back for whatever he needs," said his coach, Barney Schultz. "In a big game he is amazing."

Obviously, Gibson's best years are behind him. But he is now making up with experience whatever zip his arm has lost. "He still has good velocity and good control but from what I've seen he is not quite as fast as he was," said Don McMahon. "But he's picked up more experience. He always used his head and now he seems even smarter."

Steve Carlton, Philadelphia, 27, 6-5, 195, lefthander. There probably was no better pitcher in the majors during 1972 than Carlton. And had this poll been taken at the end of the season rather than late summer, Carlton might have ranked higher than Lolich. At one point he had won 15 straight games and had not allowed an earned run for 58 consecutive innings. He was almost certain to lead the league in strikeouts and possibly shutouts and only the durable Ferguson Jenkins matched him in innings pitched and complete games.

Considering that the team he plays for was one of the worst in the

majors, Carlton's performance was amazing.

"I think Steve Carlton is the best pitcher in baseball and I'm not just saying that because I have him," said Philadelphia's Ray Riplemeier. "I have not seen any pitcher that has three pitches that match his. Fastball, curve and slider. And he gets the ball over the plate. Sometimes you have pitchers with stuff who are wild. But not Steve."

Jim Owens, who favored Jenkins and Seaver in the survey, believes Carlton "has the best stuff" of anyone. Rube Walker of the Mets raved about Carlton's "super arm."

"He's overpowering," said Los Angeles' Red Adams. "He's got all the pitches, plus power."

"If I had to pick one man to make one pitch and the batter was a lefthander, I'd take Carlton," said the Giants' McMahon. "He has overpowering velocity and a good breaking ball."

Like Seaver, Carlton has a great future. Although a veteran of six years and two World Series trips while at St. Louis, Carlton didn't become a big winner (20-9) until the 1971 season. Most coaches are waiting to see if he develops consistency.

"This year you couldn't find a tougher pitcher," said Chicago Cubs' Larry Jansen. "But he has had a couple of off years and that's the only reason I don't value him as high as Jenkins, Gibson or Seaver."

Ferguson Jenkins, Chicago Cubs, 28, 6-5, 205 righthander. With a record for consistency unmatched in the majors over the past six years, Jenkins should have more stature than he does. Though just reaching maturity as a pitcher, Jenkins already is a spectacular winner. For five straight years (and by now probably six), he has won 20 games or more. He usually leads the league in the number of games started and completed and is always near the top in innings pitched. Last year, his 24-13 record and 2.77 ERA brought him the league's Cy Young Award.

Yet, in spite of all this, Jenkins has been overshadowed by Lolich, Seaver, Gibson and, now, Carlton. "He is just not in the same class as the others," said Don McMahon. "I mean he wins his 20 and he challenges you and throws strikes. But I don't think he has what a Seaver or Lolich has."

Ironically, it could be that Jenkins' consistency cruelly works against him.

He is so steady that he is rarely scintillating.

"There's no doubt in my mind that Jenkins is the outstanding pitcher in the league," says Houston's Owens. "Check his ERA year after year. And his walks. They are always low. And remember: He plays in the toughest park to pitch in in the National League. Yet year after year he is a winner."

Larry Jansen claims Jenkins is deceiving. "I didn't realize how strong he was until I worked with him," Jansen said. "He is very strong and doesn't tire. He never gets knocked around. He just goes out there and throws."

Red Adams thinks Jenkins could be more overpowering than he is. "He has the ability to change speed on you and moves the ball around," Adams said. "He pitches easy and can overpower you if he wants to."

"He doesn't have as much stuff as Carlton," said Don Osborn, "but he has a better placement of pitches. And he can field, bunt, hit and run as well as any pitcher now playing."

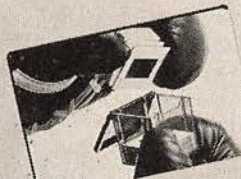
Barney Schultz is one who believes Jenkins' durability may work against him. "He's a real tough competitor and a master of all his pitches," Schultz said. "He likes to pitch and is convinced the more he pitches the better he is. That's a fallacy. He probably should get more rest. He might win less, but he'd lose less, too."

Gaylord Perry, Cleveland, 34, 6-4, 205, righthander. The lack of consistency in a ten-year career detracted from Perry's overall ranking, but there was no doubt that he was one of the best pitchers in 1972. Only twice before this season had he won 20 games but his ERA always has been among the lowest in the majors. Because he pitched in the National League until his trade to Cleveland last winter, Perry received almost as much praise from National League coaches as he did from American.

"He always has been a battling son-of-a-gun," said Red Adams of the Dodgers. "He's this type of guy: When you look at him pitching, you don't know the score by what you see. I've seen him being beaten by a pretty good margin and you'd get 13 hits off him and the next thing you knew you'd be beaten, 8-7 or something. He pitches the same, whether one run ahead or three behind."

"He doesn't really have great stuff but uses what he has well," said Jim

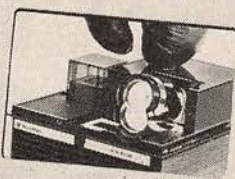
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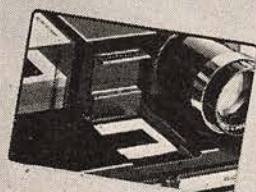
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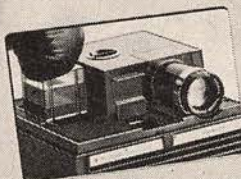
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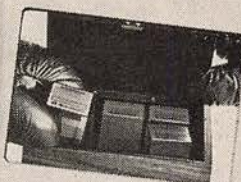
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Owens. "He's not overpowering but has a good sinker and breaking ball."

There are some coaches who feel Perry's sinker is more like a spitball. "Somehow, the ball sinks about a foot," said Tom Morgan.

But Pittsburgh's Osborn disputes such charges. "Oh, he may throw it once in a while," Osborn said. "But, really, he throws a real good sinker. That thing about the spitter is mostly psychological."

"Perry knows what he is doing with every pitch," said his coach, Warren Spahn. "When in trouble, he gets tougher."

Jim Palmer, Baltimore, 27, 6-3, 195, righthander. Palmer is another young, maturing pitcher out of the Seaver-Carlton mold whose biggest handicap is that he pitches for the Orioles.

Now, pitching for a team that has won four pennants and two World Series titles should be an advantage. But the fact that the Orioles have three other pitchers who win as much as he does has worked against Palmer.

"If you're on a club with one 20-game winner they think better of you," said California's Morgan. "But believe me, anyone who can win 20 games has to be a helluva pitcher."

Palmer has won 20 games the last two seasons and probably will continue the string this year as he approaches the lowest ERA of his career.

"If I had to pick a pitcher for one game or one pitch, it would be Palmer," said Boston's Lee Stange. "If he's had the rest and it's his turn he can just overpower anyone."

Most of the coaches believe Palmer probably has the best fastball in the league. "He throws the ball real hard," said Milwaukee's Wes Stock. "He also has good breaking stuff and great command of the off-speed pitch."

"Palmer's ball rises and is hard to pick up," said Tom Morgan.

Palmer, of course, has been plagued by arm trouble. He first arrived in the majors at 19 in 1965 and in 1966 he was one of the Orioles' best pitchers, winning 15 games. But by mid-1967 he was back in the minors with an ailing right shoulder and he didn't fully recover until 1969. Though a winner ever since, he has been wild at times.

"He still has a wild streak but not like in the past," said Hudson of the Rangers. "He's throwing better this year than ever before. I'd rate him

right up there with Lolich and Perry." **Wilbur Wood**, Chicago White Sox, 31, 6-0, 185, righthander. Wood owes his pitching eminence to Hoyt Wilhelm, Chuck Tanner and Johnny Sain as much as to himself. It was Wilhelm, then a Chicago pitcher, who taught Wood how to throw the knuckleball. Tanner, the White Sox manager, took him out of the bullpen where he had been successful for three years and turned him into a starter in 1971. Sain, Chicago's sagacious pitching coach, polished Wood's skills. As a result, Wood has been sensational. Last season he won 20 for the first time (22-13) and had an exceptional 1.91 ERA. This year he became the majors' first 20-game winner and one of the leaders in shutouts, complete games and innings pitched.

"All he has is a knuckleball but he has mastered it," admits Fowler.

"He is without a doubt the best knuckleball pitcher in the league," said Jim Turner. "And the thing about the knuckleball pitcher is that he doesn't upset himself as much. He can pitch more often than a power pitcher for he doesn't need as much rest."

Wood regularly takes a turn with three days rest. What's more, he also can pitch on two days rest and not throw any differently. At least nine times in 1972 he won with only two days rest.

"A fellow like Wood is more valuable than a guy who pitches with four days rest," said Sain. "He can pitch more often and help your ballclub more. That's why Wood is so valuable to us."

Dave McNally, Baltimore, 30, 5-11, 195, lefthander. The most underrated pitcher in the majors is probably McNally. He won 20 games four straight seasons (1968-71), and although he hasn't been as effective in 1972, that could be attributed as much to an absence of batting support as any decline in skills.

"He is an excellent pitcher," said Sid Hudson. "He has all the pitches and knows how to use them. He doesn't overpower the batter. But he can spot the fastball or curve and slider with his great control."

"His ball moves and he has a very good delivery, very deceptive," said Tom Morgan. "But he doesn't have the velocity of a Lolich or Ryan."

"He's not real impressive or powerful because of his lack of speed," said Boston's Lee Stange. "But he's

out there every fourth day and he beats you all the time."

However, Warren Spahn compares McNally to Whitey Ford. "He may even be better since he finishes games and Ford didn't," Spahn said.

McNally's own coach, George Bamberger, claims that if McNally had been playing in New York as Ford did, his status would be higher. "McNally never got the credit he was due," said Bamberger. "He has all the good pitches and outstanding poise. There is nobody in baseball with more heart than Dave McNally. I guarantee if he had been playing in New York he would be the greatest thing since Pepsi Cola."

Nolan Ryan, California, 25, 6-2, 175, righthander. No pitcher has fewer credentials but more potential than Ryan. Ryan had never won more than seven games until last season when he was 10-14 with the Mets. But an off-season trade and an instructive relationship with pitching coach Tom Morgan has propelled Ryan into a higher class.

"Ryan throws as hard as anyone I've seen," said Al Worthington of Minnesota. "Once he gets the ball over he has the potential of being another Koufax."

It's a lack of control that has kept Ryan from being perhaps the outstanding pitcher in the league this season. In mid-August he was challenging Wilbur Wood as the league shutout leader with six, and had lost several games because of wildness in the late innings. Twice he went into the eighth inning with a no-hitter and lost.

Still, by late season 1972 he had won and completed more games than ever before in his five years. And at home he was nearly unbeatable, with a record that included two one-hitters, two two-hitters and two games of 16 strikeouts apiece.

"He has outstanding stuff," Morgan said. "What he needs is to get his control down and develop a change-up."

Morgan has been instrumental in changing Ryan's delivery, timing and rhythm as well as helping him control specific pitches. "Nolan still has to get up with the good motion on his straight stuff," said Morgan. "And he is working on his control. He doesn't have a changeup yet but when he learns good control, we'll work on his change. Believe me, he could be another Koufax." ■



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"If I play your kid at marbles," says Taylor, "and if I can move one, then I'm gonna do it. I want to win!" And then he found out the marbles were loaded against him

WHAT MAKES OTIS TAYLOR EXPLODE

BY DON KOWET

"People don't understand what being black and being an athlete means," said Otis Taylor. We were sitting in his living room the morning before the Colts shattered Kansas City's three-game preseason win streak. Otis lives in a section of Kansas City where the houses prop up their eaves with antebellum pillars, but his apartment complex is a concession to "progress"—a multi-level maze of wooden bridges splicing units stacked like building blocks.

"They think you just glide around town, no problems, no worries, nothing," he continued. "But while you're gliding you're thinking about what's happening. Who has got what in this town. You're thinking about yourself. And the Marsalises and Thomases and Buchanans and Laniers—all the black ballplayers on this club. And you say: 'It's happening for the white ballplayers. There's lots of money around for them. *Why not me?*'"

"People don't understand," he added. "They don't know what it means to be a star . . . to be black . . . in Kansas City."

Remember the catch Otis made in 1971 against a Redskin team that was still undefeated? Instant adrenalin flooded your arteries when his touchdown tied the game with only minutes left. Otis Taylor, superstar. Six feet three and 220 pounds of wide receiver snaking through the Redskins' secondary, across the goal line ahead of a Len Dawson pass. And if you remember Otis, you recall Washington cornerback Pat Fischer. When Otis leaped high for the pass Fischer wrapped him in a bear-hug, pinning Taylor's left arm to his side. But Otis still had one free hand. He caught the ball and I went wild and I know you did, too. Hell, a grin even creased Hank Stram's neatly pressed face.

The thrill of it. . . .

The thrill of an ecstatic congregation inundating their open-air cathedral with choruses of "Onward Otis Taylor."

Between cigarettes Otis sat bent slightly forward, his hands palm-down and tense against the couch.

"I'm gonna tell you this," he said, "and if anything starts happening 'cause of what I'm saying—I said it because it's true, it needs to be said. Some people say I'm a star, but here the only stars are Dawson and Podolak and Stenerud. Now while I want it understood that I am not criticizing them—there is no racism on the Kansas City Chiefs' ballclub—they are the superstars off the field, and not me.

"Take the free automobile bit. Willie Lanier has a free car because it's a set thing for player reps, and Willie's ours. But you go down right now to the Kansas City Chiefs' training camp and you'll see maybe ten other cars being driven around, ten other cars with dealers' plates on them. And all of them are being driven by white boys.

"I have been here for eight years, *eight years* and I have never seen a dealer offer me a car. You get ready to *buy* a car from them and they tell you: 'Well, I'll give it to you for \$100 over cost.' And everyone knows that's a fake, too.

"Some people will say, 'Well, he makes money playing football, he should be satisfied.' But it eats you up—to see the white ballplayers getting all kinds of feedback and you getting *nothing*."

It's commercial-time during a Chiefs-Giants exhibition and you're sitting at home worrying. Your boss wears fat ties and Paisley shirts, and what the hell are you going to do with that drawerful of white-on-whites?

And then the game's on, you become Otis Taylor. You're triple-covered by the Giants' secondary with a Len Dawson pass wobbling in as a host of elbows spear your rib cage. But you can jump, dammit, with one arm raised high over your head to snare the football. Then you sprint inside, breaking two tackles for another ten yards.

"One gets the feeling," exults Howard Cosell, cushioning his staccato rap with laughter, "that Dawson could call a pass to Otis Taylor on every down and complete all of them—no matter what the defense did."

And you're laughing, too—simultaneously sitting at home and loping nonchalantly back to the huddle—until your wife turns on the vacuum cleaner a good ten minutes before halftime.

You get even when she comes close enough to tell you "lift your feet, dear"—by reminding her that vericose veins are festering on her thighs.

"That Otis Taylor is a great one, Frank," says Cosell.

And you sit there. No NFL superstar. Among omens to your own mortality—obsolete shirts, moribund veins. Trapped in your own aging body and listening for the sound of cells dying.

"I'm 30 now," Otis said quietly. "I really feel great

at this age, but I know that in five or six years I'll be too old. And sometimes at night . . . I sit up at night . . . on my bed . . . and I think: What am I going to do when this is all over? After this is done, what will I do with my life?"

I wasn't prepared to find Otis Taylor down, bitter and searching for a forum. When I came to Kansas City I anticipated the urgent, spectacular moves (his trademark on a football field) overlapping his lifestyle. For though I had never met him, scattered fragments I'd absorbed from old newspaper and magazine clips had coalesced into an image. He had a penchant for flashy clothes. His closet overflowed with 25 pairs of shoes and a change of wardrobe for every pair. He had a stake in a Kansas City nightspot called The Flanker's Lounge, where—according to sportswriter Jerry Izenberg—when you were dissatisfied with the service, you definitely did not demand to see the owner.

For years, of course, Otis had carped because he felt he had performed well enough to be selected for the Pro Bowl, but had been overlooked. But almost every athlete feels neglected at some time during his career. And his super 1971 season *had* earned him both a berth in the Pro Bowl and the AFC Player-of-the-Year Award. Every time Kansas City appeared on TV, the name Otis Taylor was set between superlatives.

So I thought I'd encounter a ballplayer riding the crest of popularity. I expected Otis to be cashing in on his fame—imbued with the Midas touch. In fact, I was five years behind the times. My outdated image coincided exactly with Arnold Hano's—when Hano had interviewed Taylor for SPORT back in 1967. The year before, Taylor had rocketed from the Chiefs' suicide squad to a starting flanker slot. By the end of the '67 season he was rated second in the league only to Lance Alworth. Describing the AFL championship game against Buffalo, Hano reported that Otis "caught a Dawson pass clear of the ten-yard line, but cornerback Tom Janik had a bead on Taylor, a clear angle shot at him. Janik came in hard and high at Taylor. The collision should have stopped Taylor cold. Instead, Janik curled to the ground, Taylor shuddered and spun full around and plowed forward, right into another defender, Butch Byrd. He just stomped over Byrd and fell into the end zone."

That was Otis Taylor, football player, five years ago and today. But the private man has changed. "Otis Taylor is with it, he is what's happening," wrote Arnold Hano back in '67. "The tense is present, and the present is very untense. Otis Taylor may have exploded onto the fields and into the headlines, but Otis Taylor plays it cool, like his generation. . . . The world is his these days (and these nights), and Otis Taylor is savoring every sweet taste. The world is here—right now—and it is to be enjoyed."



"I've never performed on a better tire."

Stunt driver, Carey Loftin, put Shell's new Steel Belted Tires through every driving test he could dream up. Here's what he said about them.

*A report from
Carey Loftin.*

SHELL: Tires are very important to a stunt driver, aren't they?

LOFTIN: Yes they are. You have to depend on your tires, first; engine, the rest of the car, second.

SHELL: You just tested Shell's new Steel Belted Tires. In general, what do you think about them?

LOFTIN: Well, I felt very secure, very safe at all times, no matter what I did. I never had one fear of failure at all.

SHELL: At one point you drove over some wet pavement, what about the skid resistance?

LOFTIN: It seemed very good and very equal and very little sway whatsoever. I was really amazed that I could hold the car as straight as I did.

SHELL: You also did some quick stops from 80 miles an hour on this wet stretch of track. How did the tires react?

LOFTIN: They all seemed to

react the same. I thought I would be real busy correcting, trying to hold the car straight. But, with very little correction, I was able to stop practically in a straight line.

SHELL: What about on the slopes and the curves, did you notice much roll-over or squirming on the part of the tires?

LOFTIN: No, they didn't. They felt the same all the time. The tires, the steering geometry never seemed to change at all.

SHELL: Carey, do you have any relatives?

LOFTIN: Yes, I do.

SHELL: Would you recommend Shell's new Steel Belted Tires to her or him?

LOFTIN: To any of them I would. I have three sisters and a brother and I would recommend them to anyone. I think they are amply

safe for the even better than average driver, not even the average driver, above average. I would say that you are amply safe with the Shell tires.

SHELL: Carey, do you have any other comments you would like to add to this at all?

LOFTIN: Not specifically. I can only say in general, I've never performed on a better tire. It seemed to hold its shape and stand up. So, in general it is one of the best tires I've ever driven on.

Ask an expert.

**Shell
products
perform.**



And now it is the beginning of the 1972 season. What's happening now is Otis Taylor exploding off the field, too. His cool detachment has dissolved; the aftertaste of sweet success turned rancid. He has scaled the heights of our athletic Olympus, and found—would you believe it?—that there are white Gods and black Gods. And that while all Gods are equal, black Gods are less equal than others.

Of course the reason for the gap between his nightmare and your dream is out there on the streets of Kansas City. A checkerboard farmland erupts suddenly into broad-beamed streets that roll down from Country Club Plaza—with its neo-Spanish arcades—through an inner-city suburb to ghettos dwarfed by the commercial district. It is a friendly city, a spawning ground for conventioners drawn off the dark prairies by big city lights. It was a slave state once, but let's not talk about that. Once long ago indignation infiltrated the spirit of a man named John Brown and turned him into a rebel. But let's not talk about Bloody Kansas, either. Down here you talk farm subsidies and Harry Truman for politics. And you talk Kansas City Chiefs for football. But not in the same breath, mind you. Don't come out here to turn Otis Taylor into a rebel.

I'm sitting among the local journalists in the press box of the Chiefs' brand new Arrowhead Stadium when an innocent from an out-of-town paper tells me:

"Ask him about his summer jobs. He says he can't get any, he says no one will hire him. That'll give you some controversy."

But who needs controversy? Do I want to hear what's bothering Otis Taylor? Even sportswriters cherish a dream or two, and one of mine is that the way for a black to transcend the common lot of his race is to become a 20th century black Paul Bunyon—an NFL superstar. So who wants controversy? What journalist needs one more club who'll refuse to cooperate the next story around? Who wants another athlete who'll use you to negotiate with management, then deny every damn libelous statement he uttered?

But the bait's there and I can't resist nibbling. "Well, why can't he get a summer job?"

"I don't know," the kid tells me. "No one here can figure it out."

I turn away from him—he's not so naive as I thought. Out on the artificial turf, before the game starts, a chorus line of high school girls is bumping and grinding through a hip halftime routine. Those reporters who are not still in the buffet-lounge swilling free hors d'oeuvres, or "interviewing" the ubiquitous cowgirl usherettes, have leapt for their binoculars.

"I'll tell you why the press here can't come up with answers," Otis said later. "I guess they want to sit in that press box. They want to keep sitting in that press

box and eating those corned beef sandwiches."

From the opening kickoff the Chiefs played as if the game didn't mean a damn, and of course they were right. In their first three exhibition games the Chiefs had slaughtered second-rate opposition. Baltimore had come into the game without a victory. The Chiefs were blase, the Colts were up, both emotionally and—by halftime—on the scoreboard, 20-3; Dawson eventually got sacked seven times, as the KC offensive wall cracked.

On every play Otis doggedly ran through his pass routes—but with no more chance of getting the ball than if he'd been warming up on the sidelines. Dawson—and John Huarte after him—almost always was forced to throw away from Otis, into the area Otis had cleared by decoying his double-coverage. The quarterbacks threw to Wendell Hayes or to Mike Adamele or to Jeff Kinney. And after every play I'd watch Otis stroll slowly back to the huddle—head down.

"All receivers feel strange when they're not being thrown to," he told me later. "You don't know what to say, but you're wondering. But the feeling deep inside of me is this: When I catch one, I'm gonna try to do my thing with it. If it's quick stuff, a four- or five-yard pass, I know if I can catch it and turn and face somebody, then I'm gonna get five or six more. Like I always say: If I play your kid at marbles, and if I can move one, I'm gonna do it. I love to win!"

Only once during the game was he able to move a marble. Near the close of the second quarter Dawson took the snap and fired to Otis, who was waiting a couple of yards past scrimmage by the right sideline.

"It was a simple square-out pattern," Otis said.

Maybe it was a routine blackboard diagram, but from a preliminary sketch drawn by slide-rule and T-square Otis created a swirling kinetic abstract. Catching the ball, he shuffled his feet to send All-Pro safety Rick Volk sprawling, then burst inside, brushing off two would-be tacklers to cut clear across the field again before he was hauled down by a gang of defenders.

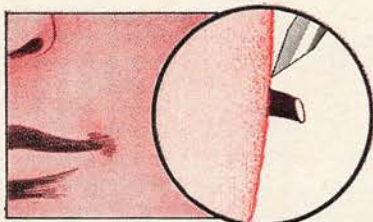
Later in the game he would catch a Huarte pass, outjumping a cornerback and linebacker . . . but everyone has a favorite Otis Taylor reception. Maybe yours is Taylor vs. Fischer—or Taylor vs. Oakland. With Oakland leading (14-13) last year and five minutes left, Dawson dropped back on a third-and-long situation. But his primary receivers were covered, with two Raider defenders blitzing. So he threw between the two attackers in the direction of Otis Taylor.

Taylor was completely blocked out of the play by Raiders Nehemiah Wilson, Phil Villipiano and Jack Tatum. But Otis fought for position and at the last possible moment rose head and shoulders above the defenders to pull down the ball. A few plays later Jan Stenerud kicked the game-winning field goal.

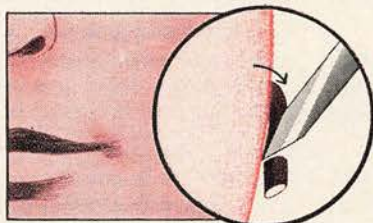
You may think our 2 blades are too many. Maybe your one blade isn't enough.

Your one blade. Is it enough?

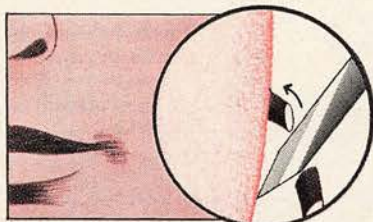
(1) When you shave
with your one blade
razor,



(2) your whisker
is actually stretched out
for a moment from
the skin.

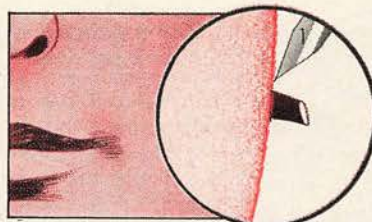


(3) But after the whisker
is shaved, it snaps right
back.
And that's that.



Our two blades. It's not too many.

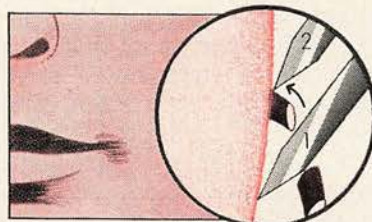
(1) When you shave
with the TRAC II,



(2) the 1st blade
stretches your whisker
out for a moment,
just like your one
blade razor.

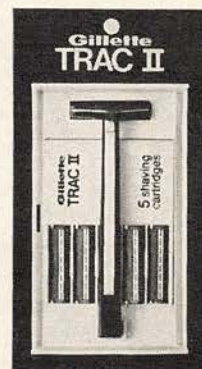
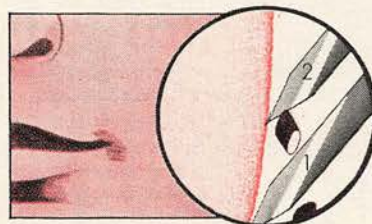


(3) But then, before
that extra whisker can
snap all the way back,



(4) the 2nd blade can
shave it again — closer.

And with 2 blades
shaving so fantastically
close, we could recess
them for extra safety.
No one blade razor
made can match it.



The Gillette TRAC II™ Two Bladed Razor

It's one blade better.

Or Super Bowl IV, 1970: With the Chiefs leading, 16-7, but Minnesota threatening, Taylor took a short pass from Dawson, broke the tackle of cornerback Earl Mackbee, and darted past defenders for a 46-yard touchdown.

Or in the 1969 game against the New York Jets: Taylor played in pain throughout with a muscle pull in his abdomen, but he caught seven passes including three for touchdowns. The Chiefs decimated the Jets, 34-16.

"Before we got Otis," says Hank Stram, "we traveled by bus. With Otis we travel by jet. I think when he's able to play and express his ability, there's not a better flanker, there's not a better *athlete* in professional football."

In fact, Otis never really intended to be a football player. Basketball was his game growing up in Houston, where life was a year-round Olympics—each sport in season.

He's from Houston's black ghetto, but his home was a brick project instead of a wood-frame house. And brick in place of wood signified something. Brick was an architectural equivalent to sign language: Thumb's up; everything's A-OK. Admittance into housing projects is circumscribed by strict rules. Tenancy in a housing project is generally awarded to those of the poor who ape successfully the mores of the white middle class majority. And throughout his childhood both of Otis' parents were steadily employed, as domestics. There was only one other mouth to feed in the family—his older sister's—and by the time he was in high school she was a nurse.

"Although I knew that we weren't hitting on much," he says, "I never really felt we were poor. We had a TV, nice furniture. We always had clothes, we always had shoes to wear. No, we didn't have a big luxury car, but my father had a truck and I used to drive it. Even then I could look around the neighborhood and see that just by having two parents at home, two parents who were working, I was a lot better off than the average black."

For poverty is relative. The irreducible common denominator lies not in possessions but in the mind. The root cruelty is that the truly poverty-stricken must dispense with hope. *Hope* becomes a luxury they cannot afford.

And Otis might have felt poor if athletics hadn't provided the dream. "I can't really look back to my childhood and visualize what I knew then or thought then," Otis says. "But when I look back at my *situation* then, the fact that the neighborhood I grew up in had a lot of great athletes had to count. And if you wanted to play in this type of neighborhood, if you were young, you had to run with the big boys. I used to play tackle football when I was very young, around the

project—a patch of concrete here, some grass there. And the big boys helped me become what I am today, 'cause all they wanted you to do was run behind them. They'd say, 'We'll block for you, we'll knock 'em down. Just run.'"

That was the dream: To become Ultimate Stud—a prince borne through the streets by four-wheeled bearers stamped Cadillac; to become a pro superstar. Otis Taylor at 17: Diligently honing the skills that would bring him fame, money . . . and the praise of Howard Cosell.

In high school Otis earned letters in four sports. "Y'know, I don't want to take anything away from my football," he says, "but I was a pretty good basketball player. In high school, in fact, I played everything, and the only reason I didn't swim was 'cause I didn't have time. But basketball was my great love. I always wanted to make it in basketball."

After his senior year he accepted a basketball scholarship to Prairie View A&M in Houston. "It was a small school," he says, "and you have to understand that ten years ago, when you had a scholarship to a small black school, you had to do two things at least, 'cause there was very little money around for scholarships. So you had to play one sport and at least be a groundskeeper for another."

After Otis' freshman year, Prairie View's athletic director told him to give football a try. "You had to play both ways," he recalls, "and on offense they made me a quarterback. And my first time out there I was tackling on defense, and I got nailed pretty good and cut up under my lip. They dragged me off to ship me to a hospital, but I guess I bled for two hours till they got me there and sewed me up. And as soon as I got back to school, I went and packed my bags. I wanted to go home. I didn't want to get hit again—I guess I was a big baby then." But a tight tourniquet of pressure was applied by coaches and family, and Otis stayed to quarterback Prairie View for the entire year. However, the next year the freshman class produced a new quarterback—Jim Kearney, now the Chiefs' first-string safety.

"As soon as I saw Kearney in action I knew he was really good, better than I was," Otis says. "But one of the line coaches had already been watching me. Before practice every day we'd go out and have what they call a 'bull session'—just tossing the ball around for 15 minutes or so. I was always catching the ball one handed or making fingertip catches and this line coach told my head coach one day: 'You're wasting him; he's no quarterback, he's a receiver.'"

So for the next three years Otis played end. "In my last year Kearney was the starting quarterback. And he was a very good quarterback when he left college," Otis adds. "He was as good as a lot of these so-called quarterbacks they're bringing up today."

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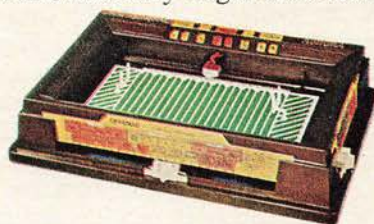
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and wash away flakes—medicates the scalp to help control flaking, itching and scaling with regular use. You've got a winner with TEGRIN!



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1. Each entry must be accompanied by the end flap from any size package of TEGRIN Shampoo or the word "TEGRIN" printed in block letters on a 3" x 5" piece of paper.
2. Entries must be individually mailed, postmarked by Dec. 8, 1972, and received by Dec. 15, 1972.
3. Winners will be determined in random drawings by Marden-Kane, Inc., an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. Winners will be notified by mail. Taxes are the sole responsibility of the winner.
4. Offer open to residents of the United States, except employees (and the families) of Block Drug Company, its advertising agencies and Marden-Kane, Inc. Offer void in Washington, Idaho, and Missouri, and wherever restricted or prohibited by law. All Federal, State and Local Laws and Regulations apply.

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"Then why isn't he playing quarterback?" I asked.

We were in Otis' Cadillac, slowly negotiating the streets of Kansas City, passing little kids wearing sweat-stained No. 89 jerseys. Pulling up at a stop-light, Otis gave me a what-kind-of-dumb-question-is-that glare. "Probably because he was black," he said.

"But it would have been different for him if he'd come into the league right now," I argued. After all, while even the staunchest NFL apologists are willing to admit—at least off the record—that prejudice against black quarterbacks may have existed in years past, current NFL dogma is that all a black man needs to play quarterback now are the requisite skills.

"Would it be different for Kearney now?" Otis said, the aggressive kick he laid on the accelerator belying the blandness in his voice.

"You don't think white players are ready for a first-string black quarterback?"

Otis replied carefully: "No, I do not."

"But Baltimore seems to be trying to go with Douglas."

Otis laughed. "Yeh, I know. L.A. 'seems to be', too. But it's my personal opinion that they only 'seem to be.' At L.A. you have Walton—a four-year black quarterback and a four-year rookie. He plays all the training camps—and then there's nothing. There are still white ballplayers around on most teams throughout the league who just aren't going to stand there and take orders from a black man. Maybe management wouldn't mind having a black quarterback on the field, but how about some of these players? If your top players, like Duane Thomas and others have said, are like artists doing their thing, then the quarterback is the hand on the artists' brush. The toughest problem for any black quarterback today would be establishing himself as a leader.

"Maybe with Kansas City, I don't know," he added. "We get along well here, white and black. There are some black ballplayers who hang in a set, and there are some white ballplayers who hang in a set. But there are some blacks and whites who hang together. For example, at dining table I like to eat around the company of certain black ballplayers—just for the bull jivin' that's going on, messin' with somebody or something. When reporters get confused is when they travel with us on the plane and they see Dave Hill and Ed Budde always sitting together, or two black guys like Emmitt Thomas and Cesar Belsar always together, every flight. They think it's racism, but what it really is is superstition. For years they've been sitting together for protection, because a lot of these guys are scared as hell of flying. If they sit in the same place, with the same guy, the plane's not gonna crash, y'know?"

"I sit anywhere—as long as it's not in the middle seat.

I don't care who sits with me. White or black, ballplayer or someone from the PR department."

Jim Kearney went on to play with the Chicago Bears, as a defensive back, while Otis went to the Chiefs to play end. In the process, he starred in the most famous baby-sitting case of all—in an era when the competing AFL and NFL shifted prospective candidates from motel to motel across the country to keep them away from the rival league.

Although the NFL Eagles had Otis locked up in a Dallas hideaway, Chiefs' scout Lloyd Wells had obtained the address from one of Otis' girlfriends. A few hours later—and his wallet a few dollars tip-money lighter—Wells discovered the room in which Otis was lodged, led him out through a back window, through an alley, into a car, and out to the airport to catch a plane for Kansas City.

Still, no matter how bitter the struggle for his body, a rookie in 1965 wasn't pampered. "I wanted to play right away," Otis recalls, "but the Chiefs had experienced receivers in Chris Burford and Frank Jackson. I had to wait. I went through things a little differently from the way receivers start now. I played on the specialty teams and I mean all of them—kickoffs, returning kicks, everything. Not many receivers do that."

His chance came in a November game in Boston. Burford suffered a shoulder separation and Taylor became a starter. "Our last few games that year were pretty tough ones," he says. "They really gave me good experience."

In his second year, 1966, Otis caught 58 passes for 1297 yards, while establishing his reputation for making the big, crowd-rousing play. His third year, 1967, he caught 59 for 958 yards. In 1968, a pulled groin muscle caused his yardage total to dip into the 600s, when he missed eight games. A knee injury in 1969 prevented him from playing in three games, and cut his stats down to 41 receptions for 696 yards. Nineteen-seventy was a low-point, with Taylor pulling down only 34 catches for 618 yards. And then came his super year of 1971, when Otis caught 67 passes for 1110 yards—plus the imagination of pro football fans. It was a year when—at the ballpark or on TV—you waited through an entire game for the moment when Otis got the ball. You waited for the one-handed catches, the way he dodged clutching hands like a greased pig. You waited for him to be selected for the Pro Bowl, and he was. You waited for him to be named the AFC's MVP—and he was.

And then it was his turn to wait.

He hired an answering service to handle all those requests for personal appearances he knew would be forthcoming—the kind that white ballplayers around town had been getting for years without having super seasons on the football field. He got a couple of offers, true. To open supermarkets for a \$150 fee, when he

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knew that some white ballplayers on the Chiefs were being offered \$500.

He waited for the 101 Awards banquet, when the local sportswriters name the Chiefs' MVP. It was held at a hotel a mile and a half away from his home, and Otis Taylor didn't even get Honorable Mention.

He waited for someone to offer him the kind of radio job that Dawson and Podolak and Stenerud already had.

He waited for one of these back-slapping, glad-handing Kansas City tycoons to offer him equal time with Dawson, Podolak and Stenerud shooting commercials.

Most every morning during the offseason he'd get up, breakfast, pick up a sports magazine or turn on the TV. . . .

He's still waiting.

It was the day after the Colt game and we were back in Otis' living room. His wife Cheryl—a beautiful girl from Bonham, Texas, whose quick direct smile can put a stranger at ease—had fixed ice-cold soft drinks. While I sipped I stared at a photograph on the wall above the mantelpiece: Muhammad Ali, Warren Wells and Otis Taylor—posing together in street clothes. Otis followed my glance and commented ironically:

"Look at me, with my shaved head, my square-cut suit."

And I knew what he was thinking: Who, back in 1967, would have predicted that writer Hano's detached young subject would ever generate enough hostility toward the establishment to justify his inclusion in that trio?

"Why all this money for white ballplayers but none for us?" he was reiterating, his tone vacant of emotion, beyond emotion. "Look at Lenny, a good quarterback and a popular guy. The fact is, I actually have to argue with my own race in favor of Lenny. All the small-minded black people come up to me after a game like last night. They sneer and say: 'So-and-so ain't *sheet!*' 'cause they think Lenny should have thrown to me more. So I defend him, 'cause Lenny and I have been together for years, and I know I don't have to worry about him. When he can get that ball to me, he will."

"But one fact I have to recognize if I want to be a realist: Every time I catch that ball, it helps me, so far as my average. But it helps Lenny more—'cause he can convert those completions into cash-on-the-line off the field, and I can't."

"Two and a half years ago I worked during the offseason, for a bank. Two and a half years ago," he said heavily. "I made the statement a few months ago that

I would be happy to eat dog food if the money was right to do a commercial, and I mean that! I once did a \$300 TV commercial for a TV antenna company here in town. It wasn't very well planned, it wasn't money compared to what white ballplayers get. But I figured, maybe if I do it something might happen."

"Nothing. I advertised for a black guy in town who was promoting a barbecue sauce. I did it free, 'cause he was a friend."

"All that's open to black athletes in this area are charity commercials, and we do them all—drugs, sickle cell anemia, the big brother program. Now don't get me wrong; we *want* to do them. I do them 'cause I think I can help ghetto kids stay out of trouble. But the sad fact is—and no one seems to realize this—that if black ballplayers don't do these kinds of commercials they probably won't do any at all."

"You look at the clothes situation, at the manufacturers who use ballplayers for clothing commercials. The majority of these commercials are done by white ballplayers—in TV, magazines, everything. Then you look at blacks, and the way they dress. From mod-ware to the very conservative. Blacks do buy clothes, that's one thing they're gonna buy. They're gonna dress as fine as they can—whether it's on cash or on credit."

"Now, these are white manufactured products they're buying. I have two closets full of clothes in my bedroom and everything is produced by factories owned by white men. But they say you can't sell shirts by using a black man in a commercial—as if blacks really want to see all these white faces!"

"These people who are in power—what do they think we are? Do they think we're *unphotogenic*? Do they think we can't *talk*?"

Otis' wife passed through the room on her way to the kitchen. Young, pretty, bright friendly smile . . . no kids yet, but later for sure. . . .

"Buck Buchanan and I were sitting right here the other night," Otis said. "And we were talking about the future, about how if nothing's happening for us while we're still playing, how bad will it be after? If we're just meat, who'll want to give us a chance to show we can do something else after we're done playing football? And we talked about our families. And then I saw the look in his eyes, and I know he saw it in mine."

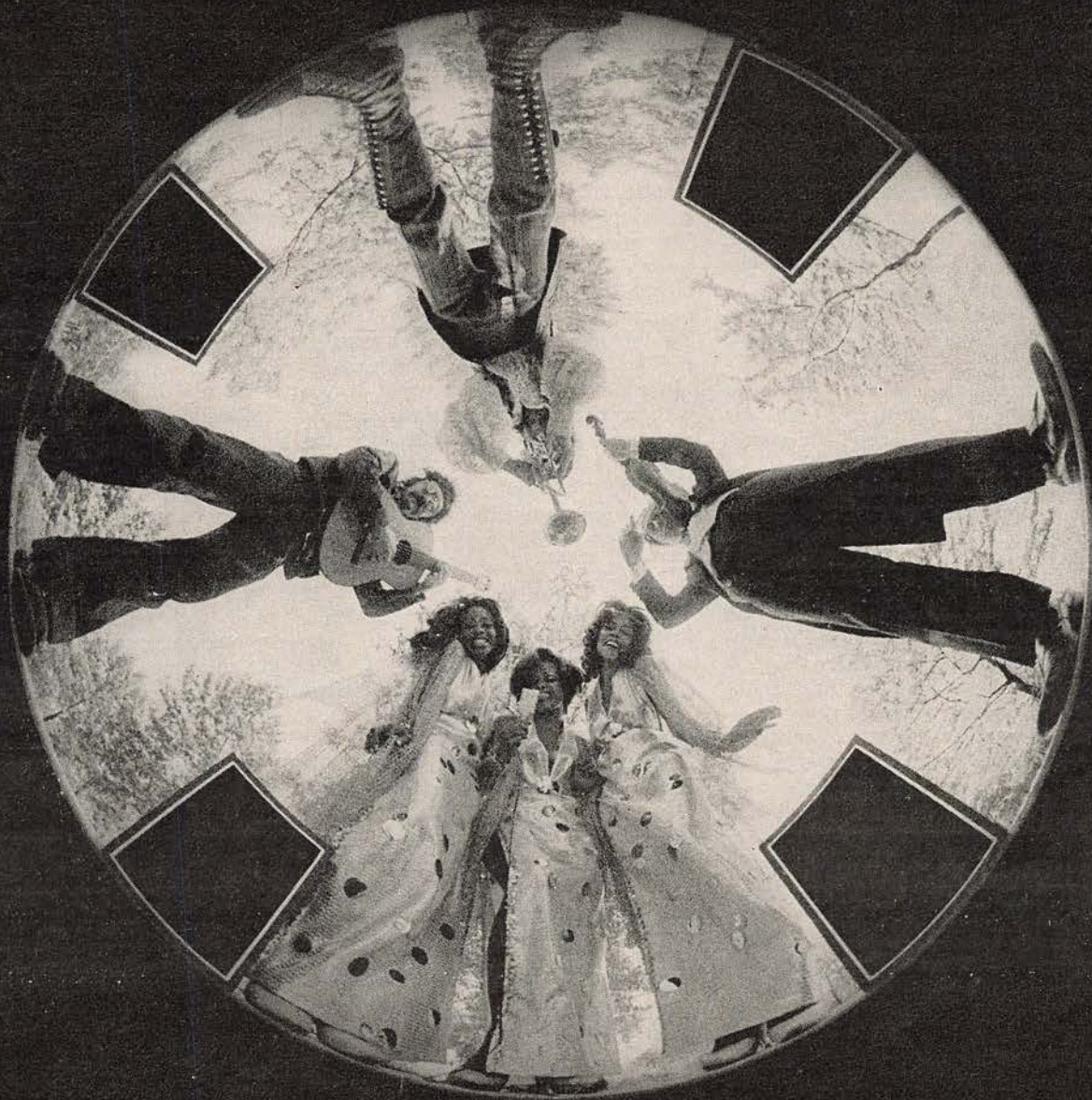
Otis' wife had entered the room. She was standing near the kitchen door. She wasn't smiling.

"I saw the look in Buck's eyes," Otis said, his voice barely audible. "It made me *sick*, to see the fear."

The hopelessness . . . the voice vacant of emotion. . . . Years ago I had been a caseworker for a department of public welfare, wallowing among the poverty-stricken. So I recognized the symptoms.



Surrender. You're surrounded.

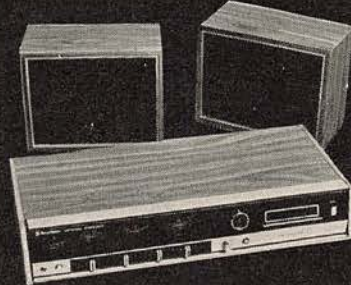
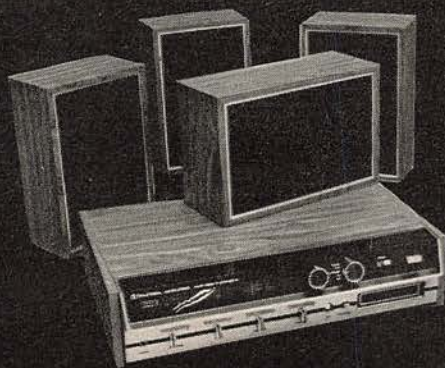


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BELL & HOWELL

(Continued from page 65)
man for the NFLPA?

Curry: Both views would correspond. Let's take the past decade and block it out. Look at the amount of money that has been made (by the owners); we won't go into specific dollars and cents, but the amount has been incredible. As a result, the Players Association took the stand that its members deserved the same kind of benefits that people in other industries enjoyed, especially in view of the fact that our career span is so short. The average player who makes a team in the NFL—and this does not include players that are out their first year—has a career span of 4.6 years. In other forms of industry, an average worker, if he does a good job and is more or less a steady worker, will be there as long as 40 or more years. Accordingly, he will accumulate benefits over that period of time.

The players' stand was essentially that they wanted to share in the profits that they helped generate. At the same time, we recognize that the owners have taken the financial risks by investing capital and procuring stadiums. As businessmen, they are entitled to profits, but we merely felt that we should have the benefits that others (in various fields) have.

There are a lot of football players who have been treated poorly in terms of injuries over the years. We felt that the players should have a procedure that they could follow if they did have an injury grievance. The result was the introduction of the neutral physician and arbitrator concept that was a direct result of the 1970 strike.

I don't like unions that much myself. I'm not a union man per se—there are some things that unions do in this country that I think are ludicrous. But I feel that in this particular situation the only way that we could achieve our goals was to act as an association. Thus we formed ourselves as just that. The owners refused to recognize us, and then our only course of action was to obtain official certification as a union. We did not want to do so. We were forced into it by the owners of football, and we found it necessary to fight tooth and nail for every benefit.

As Mike indicated, there is a very real danger that the players could, in the future, strike over something insignificant. This is what happened in baseball when their players struck

over something that wasn't all that important or unsolvable. As a result, they lost a large percentage of their following. It's something that is frightening, and I hope that we learned a lesson from it.

Owner and player alike should benefit from baseball's mistake. We don't want that situation—we don't want to be slinging mud at each other in the papers and that kind of thing. We want to have an atmosphere of mutual respect. In the past when either Mike or myself would go in to negotiate our contracts with Carroll Rosenbloom, he would acknowledge the fact that we were integral parts of his team and thus we were treated with respect. However, when the association went to negotiate with the owners committee we were treated like slobs and idiots. As a result there was a real problem in communication. Right now, however, we feel that we have begun to have the kind of relationship with the owners that is mutually beneficial to both parties.

Interviewer: *Mike, in view of fact that you are not a member of the Players Association, how do you justify receiving the benefits that accrue to members of the association?*

Curtis: I'm just lucky, that's all. If I didn't have the benefits, I wouldn't complain about it. Rather than bitch about it, I'd go out and try and make them up on my own. I don't like the idea of subsidizing peripheral players. I'm not concerned with the individuals who are foolish enough to be unable to take care of themselves. I feel that they should be able to invest their money wisely, and if they are unable to do so, well then, that's too damn bad. That's simply one of the inequities in our society. We can't make everyone equal economically. We can't bring everyone up to a salary level of \$15,000. We can't have everyone retiring at so much a year after reaching a common age. I don't believe in that kind of subsidization—that's all there is to it.

Interviewer: *What do you think of Mike's philosophy of not subsidizing peripheral players, Bill?*

Curry: If this is a discussion about the basic philosophical differences between Mike and myself, then we've now gotten down to the nitty-gritty. Because—and Mike and I have discussed this many times—I feel that people who are fortunate and have been blessed with a lot of ability and have been placed in a particular sit-

uation so that they can profit from their talent at a very high rate of return, they not only have an opportunity but they also have a moral obligation to help people who are less fortunate because of their circumstances. There are people who did not have a chance to go to and play at Georgia Tech as I did, or at Duke as Mike did. Because we were fortunate, I feel an obligation to help those people who aren't as fortunate. At the same time, I would like to make it clear that I don't think that such a philosophy makes me virtuous and Mike not virtuous. That's just a difference in the way we think.

Such a difference doesn't mean that we can't operate together as integral parts of a team. You'll find such differences in any kind of organization or institution. I'm not trying to soften the difference, because it is a very basic one. I tend toward the viewpoint that the people who control the wealth of our society are going to have to do something for the masses or our whole society is going to crumble in front of us. The Players Association is one small segment of that society.

If people who have made a great deal want to take part in a program that will be to the mutual good of the football playing community, then that's their option. If they don't want to be a part of it, then that's their option as well.

Interviewer: *In the past, Mike, you have been quoted as saying you don't think that an athlete, given the ills of our society, should be paid more than \$100,000. Is this accurate and if so why do you feel that way?*

Curtis: Yes, it's an accurate quote. The only reason why movie stars or ballplayers get that kind of money is because of the public demand for their services. I don't believe that playing a game, especially if you really believe that it's a game, can be worth \$100,000 a year.

Curry: We've found something to agree on. It doesn't make sense for someone to be paid \$600,000 on a two-year contract to play a game. Even though the game is a business and the demand is there, it still doesn't make sense to invest that much money in playing a game. There are people in Kentucky and elsewhere who don't have enough to eat.

Interviewer: *How does the Players Association feel about the establish-*

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A man wearing a wide-brimmed cowboy hat and a heavy, fur-lined coat is shown in profile, smoking a cigarette. He is wearing brown leather gloves and holding a lit match. The background is a warm, golden-brown color.

Come to where the flavor is.

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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.



ment of a wage scale of the type used by most other unions, in which benefits and salary are based on longevity rather than ability?

Curry: The players would never allow that. We like to negotiate our own salaries, and no one would want a union as such to negotiate individual or collective contracts. We're in a unique situation. We are not piece workers or hourly workers. We're rated strictly on performance. Mike Curtis, for example, should not be paid less because I have a bad year. Well, we play different positions, but he shouldn't be paid less because some other middle linebacker had a poor season. That's the one place where we've got to maintain the integrity of the individual. Even if everyone in the Players Association hierarchy wanted to do this, the players themselves would never allow such a move to take place.

Interviewer: *Mike, such a philosophy would seem to indicate that there is little chance the Players Association would become a union of the kind that you feel has come to dominate and, in some cases, destroy certain businesses.*

Curtis: I look at any kind of organization that bargains for a group of workers for collective benefits as a union, and the Players Association still fits that definition.

Interviewer: *Has the NFLPA become too militant in expressing its demands?*

Curry: Well, I think it depends upon your definition of militancy. What it has become is more efficient. The NFLPA has become a functioning business instead of a country-club operation.

For instance, the artificial turf situation. It looks as though players are being injured at a higher rate on artificial turf than had previously been the case on grass. As a result we asked for a study—that's all we asked for. The owners rejected it. So then we asked for a moratorium so that we could conduct a study, and they rejected that move as well. Finally, the unfair labor practice petition was filed.

There is an air of so-called militancy, but it's only because of the fact that we have a staff now that is capable of responding to various situations that in the past were treated in a slipshod manner.

In terms of our goals and objectives the Players Association is no more

militant than before. We've learned that the owners treat us with a lot more respect now that we have the backing of the players as well as a capable staff. We are prepared now when we go into a meeting with proposals based on sound business practices. The firms that represent us are well known and highly regarded corporations, whether it be the law firm, the actuarial firm or what have you.

Interviewer: *Earlier we mentioned the baseball players' strike that took place last April. Football, of course, had its own work stoppage back in 1970. Mike, you were the only starting player in the entire league to report to camp—why?*

Curtis: There were many reasons, aside from the fact that I was going to have to learn a new position. (Mike had been shifted to MLB from his outside linebacking spot in the middle of the 1969 season.) I wanted to report because the people who were paying me asked me to do so; I had to prepare for the coming season, and, besides, the idea of an athlete striking is repugnant to me. I was content with the retirement fund and benefits that I was getting until I was told differently, until I was told that I was unhappy. However, I wasn't unhappy—I was satisfied.

Interviewer: *Did you experience any repercussions because of what many considered as an effort by you to break the strike?*

Curtis: No. But let me clarify something. There was no move on my part to break the strike. My reaction was an individual thing based on what I felt was of primary importance to myself.

Interviewer: *Bill, what is your reaction to the contention that there is a conspiracy on the part of the owners to diminish the power of the NFLPA by trading and releasing the spokesmen of the union?*

Curry: I don't think that the statistics would support any such argument—except in a couple of situations—I don't think that a coach or an owner is going to trade a good football player just because he happens to be a player rep. Unless, of course, the man is an obnoxious agitator and trouble maker. But, that's not the kind of player who holds office in the NFLPA.

Interviewer: *What about the case of John Mackey? Since his election as the president of the NFLPA he has lost his starting job at tight end with the*

Colts. Is Tom Mitchell that much of a better player, or is Mackey being benched because of his activities in the association?

Curry: Don McCafferty would never demote a man because of his activities with the Players Association. He plays the guys who are going to win him some football games. The owners would not insist that the coach bench the man only because he happens to be a spokesman for the NFLPA. Neither I nor John Mackey would claim that the reason Tom Mitchell has started in the recent past is because of John's activity with the association.

Curtis: It would be stupid to claim that John is being blackballed. Mitchell beat him out. John has been hurt and unable to perform up to his potential. Consequently, Tom Mitchell has been playing better and the films show why he's starting. I think that most of that trash is just the press talking.

Interviewer: *What kind of effect has Mike's criticism of the Players Association had on the Colts?*

Curry: I think Mike has handled the situation in an excellent way. He answers questions when he's asked his opinion, but he has never gone out of his way to become an anti-association crusader. As a result he's never created any inner turmoil around the team. Therefore, there haven't been any factions created.

Interviewer: *Although it's not the case with the Colts, could a similar situation on another team affect the way that it plays?*

Curry: The common interest in winning and making your team the best possible one would be of the most importance. That's a lot more important to the Colts than anything about the Players Association. My most important job is to perform for the Baltimore Colts. And, I'm paid to play just as Mike is.

Two years ago, I felt uncomfortable while we were striking, but I felt that it was for something that was worthwhile. I wasn't happy with the situation, but neither was I glorying in the fact that we were throwing our power in the face of authority.

I love to play football, and anyone who plays our respective positions has to love the game. There isn't enough money to pay us for what we go through in training camp just so that we can get ready physically to play this game. I don't want to get

maudlin or sentimental, but I guarantee you, there is something extra to being on this team. And, that's more important to me than anything else.

Curtis: In regard to my position, I don't believe in causing any problems by going around and telling the others that they are wrong for belonging to the association. As long as the Players Association doesn't bother me, I don't bother them. If someone comes along and asks me how I feel, then I'm going to have my say, but I'm not about to tell the other players what they should do. All I want is to be left alone to play the game. I don't want any outside influences to be bothering my performance or that of the team.

That's all that I consider to be important. To read something else into the fact that I would go out of my way to criticize the Players Association is damn wrong. I don't have anything to say about it except for the fact that I don't want to be a member because I don't believe in unions. I have no objection to Bill being a member or the whole team for that matter. If they believe that it's beneficial for them to belong, that's fine with me. If it got to the point where I would only receive my benefits if I remained a member of the association, I still would have resigned from it. I wouldn't be upset if I didn't receive the pension benefits yet I'm happy as hell to get them. I know that sounds contradictory, but it's the way that I feel. It's the same way with making money. I'd be happy to get \$100,000 a year, but I wouldn't complain and hold out if I didn't get what I wanted. I might play out my option, but I would never hold out and not play this game.

Interviewer: *If you were to play out your option and there was no market for your services, what would your reaction be then? A number of players have done so in the past year, but very few have signed on with new clubs. If such a situation did arise would it affect your views on the necessity of the Players Association?*

Curtis: It wouldn't be worth striking over. I believe that once I set my course I should pursue the goals that I've set for myself. The reason why you play this game is because you like to, and you've got a need to win. Everything else is extraneous.

Interviewer: *Even the money?*

Curtis: Yes, even the money. Every-

thing is aside from the main reason why you play football and that's winning. Of course, I want money as much as the next guy—I'll bitch about it and I'll save like crazy. But if I were to sign for say \$20,000 over a ten year period that would be it. I'd play for what I obligated myself to perform for. I'm not about to play outside the rules, and there would be no way that I'd want to restructure those rules.

Curry: Before commenting about the so-called option clause and the power of the Commissioner to award compensation, let me clarify the point that when you speak about options, the player isn't playing out 'his' option. Rather, it's the club's option to renew the contract. The player himself has no option. If the club doesn't want him—he's gone.

So, when you have an established player who does play out the club's option, and there is no team that is supposedly interested in signing him, and the reasons given for the non-availability of jobs is directed at the unreasonable demands of the player along with petty intimations that the player wasn't around when the other clubs called him, well that's something that the Players Association would like to put an end to. It's an unfortunate situation, and we know that other teams would have to be interested in a player of that kind of caliber, but for one reason or another they are loathe to initiate contact with the player or his agent. Of course, the overriding reason cited is the fear of the compensation that will be extracted by Commissioner Rozelle if the two teams cannot agree on just compensation.

In regard to the question as to whether the Rozelle Rule will be a salient point in the coming negotiations, may I point out that we've already filed a suit against this rule. Hopefully, the result will allow a player to play out the club's option and have it be meaningful. This is not to say that it will affect every player. To the contrary, most players are happy where they are. But under the present circumstances, a player unhappy where he is has a choice of either remaining unhappy, or quitting.

Once again, we've not filed suit against the option clause, but rather the rule that gives the Commissioner the power to decide in matters of compensation. ■

"MOM WAS AFRAID . . ."

(Continued from page 80)

lettered in bright red on the front and "GOODBYE" emblazoned on the back. Pruitt is a tightly muscled 5-9, 176-pounder, with an alert face decorated by a sparse mustache and a conspicuous gold front tooth that he claims blinds tacklers.

We rode an elevator up to his hotel room and Pruitt grumbled mildly about the early evening curfew that chased the players off Bourbon Street, the morning meetings and the rest of the military-like regimentation designed to fill the day with football. "You'd think we were little kids away from home for the first time," he said.

In his room, sitting on unmade beds with an innocuous television program in the background filling gaps in the conversation, we talked for an hour about his development from a little kid into a famous football player, and it soon became evident that life for Greg Pruitt has been much more an uphill run than a downhill run, recent appearances to the contrary.

"I started playing football when I was nine," he said. "I got a uniform for Christmas. I bothered my mom, who was separated from my dad and took care of me, for months to buy me that uniform, and when she did I found it before Christmas hidden away in a big gift-wrapped box and took the box apart and put it together again.

"I was always the littlest kid in the neighborhood. When I was seven I had a basketball hoop in my yard and the neighborhood kids threw me off my own court. In football I had to play center—for both teams. That was like having to play rightfield in baseball, only worse. I used to ask mom why God made everyone big but me. My two brothers are both well over six feet. Naturally I wanted to play quarterback, but there was a long line of kids who wanted to play quarterback. Then one day we didn't have enough players and I got to play quarterback.

"Mom was afraid I'd get killed playing with the big kids. I remember one kid getting both legs broken. But they couldn't hit me squarely. We'd play in the street. That's how I developed a lot of moves. The street was narrow and you had to be shifty to get past people."

Pruitt was a quarterback in junior high school in Houston, Texas. The

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Here's how some smart hunters prepare to make the long shots in open or mountainous country. And why they make them with our Model 700 Bolt Action Rifle.

One of the great hunting challenges is to bag a trophy buck, ram, goat or pronghorn in country that requires long-range shooting. It takes practice, plenty of practice, and Remington's experienced designer-hunters suggest that you start by picking one cartridge and sticking with it so you can really learn how it performs. Then start by shooting from a rest at a 100-yard target until you become proficient. Practice other ranges, too, to help yourself learn to judge distances.

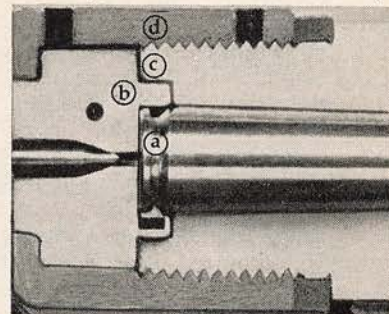
Graduate from a rest to hunter's shooting positions as soon as you can. Practice the sitting position, which is the steadiest and best to use wherever possible (see Photo A), and the offhand or standing position, which is the most difficult, but often your only choice in the field (see Photo B).

If you have the facilities, try shooting at a target that's shaped like a deer from different distances—and different angles. Another good way to practice is to have a friend roll

Out in the field, the most practical way to estimate distance and windage is to touch off a shot and look for the dust to see where it strikes. That should tell you what you have to know to aim properly. But, if the game is 300 yards away or more, the true sportsman thinks twice before he shoots.

Practice with the rifle you'll hunt with. Remington's experts suggest our Model 700 as a wise choice for long-range work. It has enormous capabilities because of the way it's designed and built. For example, it has one of the strongest center fire bolt actions ever made (see Photo C). Each bolt is individually hand-fitted to each rifle and has the serial number of the rifle on it. And before each rifle is shipped, it's proof-tested, then checked for accuracy and functioning. If a Model 700 doesn't measure up, it doesn't leave the factory.

C. Cutaway view of the Model 700 Bolt Action. The cartridge head (a) is completely surrounded by three rings of solid steel—the bolt head (b), the barrel (c), and the receiver (d). Note that there are no extractor cutaways to weaken this critical area.



A. Sitting Position. Note how the hunter's elbows and legs provide a solid support.



B. Standing Position. Bracing yourself against something helps steady your rifle.

targets down a hill for you to shoot at. (Always be sure of your background.) Empty oil drums or discarded tires with a piece of cardboard in their centers, for example, make excellent "action" targets. They not only keep changing distance, but also simulate the bounding path of running game.

Judging distance is only part of the challenge. You also have to allow for the effect of the wind, if any, on your bullet.

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You might have trouble choosing between the Model 700 BDL "Custom Deluxe" and the 700 ADL "Deluxe". The BDL, with its handsome Monte Carlo stock protected by Du Pont's tough RK-W finish, black fore-end tip and white line spacers, hinged floor plate, "jeweled" bolt and sling strap with quick-release swivels is a tempting buy, with prices starting at \$174.95*. The ADL has, among other features, a Monte Carlo stock, skip-line checkering, and Du Pont RK-W wood finish, and it's priced from \$154.95*. You should have no trouble choosing ammo to feed the model you select—Remington or Peters cartridges—the ones we use to test it with.

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joke was that he was so short—only 4-3—that he didn't have to bend to take the snap from center. When he first reported for the team the smallest pants size was a 26 that left enough room around his middle for the football. "I spent most of my time holdin' up my pants," he said.

He was a quarterback for most of his high school career, too, at predominantly black B. C. Elmore. "I ran sprintouts usually," he says. His senior year he moved to split end, where he caught 87 passes and scored 26 touchdowns.

Although Pruitt showed exceptional promise, the college flesh merchants did not come flocking. Pruitt was tiny, his school was tiny and his flesh was black. The Southwest Conference, sprawling across Texas, is among the country's most backward racially.

Only Oklahoma and the University of Houston showed much interest in Pruitt, the latter more than the former until nearly the last minute. Pruitt gave Houston a preliminary commitment, then changed his mind when Oklahoma finally sought him avidly. Oklahoma coach Chuck Fairbanks formerly was a top assistant at Houston and has hustled the area more intensively than any of his predecessors, but Bill Michael, the only member of the Sooner staff who had seen Pruitt, had to wage a months-long crusade to get him a scholarship, repeatedly emphasizing that Pruitt had great instincts and could team with the widely-heralded Mildren on pass patterns.

At Oklahoma he became a split end on a pro-type offense that emphasized the pass. Early in his sophomore season he did not start as Oklahoma won two and lost one against modest opposition. With powerful Texas next on the schedule in one of college football's bitterest rivalries, coach Fairbanks did an audacious thing. He completely changed offenses, going to the new Wishbone that Texas itself had first trotted out in 1968.

The grateful Longhorns promptly massacred the uncertain Sooners 41-9. In Norman, where second-guessing the football coach is the municipal pastime, unrest was rampant.

In retrospect, of course, Fairbanks looks brilliant. Oklahoma righted itself the second half of that 1970 season to finish with a 7-4 record and tie Alabama 24-24 in a tingling

Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl game. Then last year they rolled over their opposition—except for national champion Nebraska which won, 35-31, in a thriller. By midseason of '71 Pruitt could find no takers for his locker-room bets that he'd run up astronomical statistics against the next opponent. Fairbanks today implies that he switched to the Wishbone two seasons ago to take advantage of Pruitt's running ability. "We decided it would be easier to hand the ball to him than throw it to him," he says.

With all due respect for Fairbanks' ability, which is considerable, Pruitt's eventual blossoming probably happened more by accident. Through six games of the 1970 season, with Oklahoma standing 3-3, Pruitt still had played little. He saw extensive action for the first time against Iowa State in the seventh game—and then largely because Everett Marshall, playing ahead of him, was injured. Pruitt ran the winning conversion points and the following week turned two short passes from Mildren into long scoring plays against Missouri, and from then on Fairbanks had to make far fewer wishes about his Wishbone. Pruitt had won another uphill battle.

"The players had no faith in the pro offense," Pruitt said in New Orleans. "We were passing a lot but without much success. I was dreaming at night about being great at my position, catching 60 passes a game. In my dreams I'm always the hero, but in the games I wasn't. I didn't like the Wishbone at first, but I didn't understand it. I had an advantage moving to the backfield in the Wishbone—I had experience running in an open field. The formation lets the defense decide where it wants to get hurt."

Later that day I rode to practice on the chartered team bus with Mildren, a perceptive young man who gave further insight into the capabilities of Pruitt and the Wishbone. "He does everything so easily," he said. "He thrives on challenges. He's confident—he likes to say he's cocky but he isn't. He's popular. He makes bold predictions to put pressure on himself because then he plays better. He makes great plays on his own, by improvising. He has 4.4 speed in the 40."

"He's a tremendous team player, the best blocking back we have. Nebraska overplayed him and took away the outside, but he never com-

plained or asked for the ball. He just blocked all day. He's little but durable. Our trainer, Ken Rawlinson, kids him because he's always wrapping himself in more tape than a mummy. But he's out there on Saturday."

From enthusing about Pruitt, Mildren turned to enthusing about the Wishbone, named for the conformation of the backs. "The defense has to cover every back on every play," he said. "It's the greatest offense to get outside—it puts tremendous pressure on the corner man. In effect, you call audibles after the ball is snapped, depending on how the defense reacts. The triple option is the basic play. I start down the line and the fullback hits inside. If the defense takes the fullback, I keep going. Then if the defense takes me, I pitch to the halfback. If the defense takes the halfback, I keep the ball and cut upfield. The weakness of the formation, if you can call it that, is that you have only one split receiver to run pass routes. We fumbled a lot, and people called that a weakness, but we didn't fumble handling the ball. The pros say it isn't a good third-and-ten offense, but how often do you have third-and-ten? The Wishbone would force the pros out of the zone defenses."

Can Pruitt keep gaining great gobs of yards without Mildren to divert the defense? "The coaches probably will find ways to get him the ball more between the inside and the outside. He can run inside if he has to. He's strong. And I think he may be thrown to more next year. He's a terrific receiver, but he caught only four passes this year. The quarterback behind me, Dave Robertson, is a slower runner but a better passer, and with freshmen eligible a new black quarterback from Galveston, Kerry Jackson, has the potential to break right in. His high school team ran our playbook. The first part of the schedule isn't too tough and should give everyone time to adjust."

"The defenses keyed on Steve Owens his last year at Oklahoma and he won the Heisman Trophy." When Owens, now with the Detroit Lions, visited Oklahoma last year Pruitt met him and kidded him: "Shoot man, you'd have to play defense on this club."

"I don't think you'll see too many more Nebraska games, when Greg got only 53 yards," Mildren continued. "Nebraska kept him from get-

ting the ball but we gained 490 yards."

That afternoon the Sooners, in shorts, cavorted through a noncontact practice at Tulane Stadium. During a passing drill Pruitt burst to the sideline near where I was standing and made a striking one-handed, one-footed catch while barely staying inbounds. A pro coach who was watching remarked that Pruitt is going to make some pro team a great wide receiver. (That does not quite jibe with the reaction a Dallas Cowboy official gave me. He said, "How many midgets are playing pro ball?") I was impressed by Pruitt's hands, and remembered that Oklahoma, for one reason or another, had slipped super pro receivers Tommy McDonald and Lance Rentzel through school without throwing to them. Pruitt himself says he would like to be drafted by a team like the Kansas City Chiefs, which favors small running backs.

The game the next day was one of the most one-sided I have ever seen between two top-rated teams. Oklahoma methodically humiliated Au-

burn 40-22, and it was not as close as the final score indicates; at the half it was 31-0 and the Sooners hadn't worked up a sweat despite the hot, muggy New Orleans weather. It may seem odd to characterize an offense that rushed for 439 yards as methodical, but that's the way the Sooners operated. Instead of "three yards and a cloud of dust" it was "nine yards and a puff of Polyturf."

Pruitt was out of the limelight most of the first half. Auburn double-teamed him, and Mildren ran wild on inside cuts to win the Most Valuable Player trophy. But, to one whose binoculars were trained on Pruitt because one was being paid to write a magazine profile on him, he was brilliant. On the opening kickoff he threw a rolling block into a huge Auburn end and brought him crashing down like a felled redwood. On Oklahoma's first touchdown drive he ran for a critical first down at the Auburn nine, and when Mildren fumbled on the following play Pruitt recovered. He hustled down under Sooner punts to force one fair catch after another and he faked and blocked Mildren to touchdowns. In

the second half the Auburn defense paid more attention to Mildren, after it was too late, and Pruitt worked loose to total 95 yards and a TD.

After he had showered and shrugged into glossy pink and lavender underwear brighter than any sports clothes I own, let alone what's underneath, he talked dispassionately about his performance. "If I'm not carrying the ball, I'm blocking. Auburn took away the pitchout and gave our quarterback inside yardage. They handed us the game. I can't complain. It's still a team sport, you know. Sure I'd like to get the ball more. I'm going to have to gain more yardage inside. My goals for 1972 are to run for 2000 yards and win the Heisman." Coming from anybody else that would sound like outlandish bravado. Greg Pruitt's teammates, having been burned as often as opposing defenses by the little whirling dervish, aren't betting him he won't succeed. I think it's very possible that Pruitt's ballcarrying statistics will shrink and his all-round excellence and value to his team increase. That may not win him the Heisman, but it's what the game should be about. ■

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THE TRIALS OF A ROOKIE QUARTERBACK

(Continued from page 71)

one of benevolent paternalism, and therefore, an excellent site for a black rookie quarterback. Art Rooney grew up on the mean streets of Pittsburgh's North Side at a time when people spit on Irishmen. Without hesitation he refers to Gilliam as "a nice boy." Yeah, the location is fatherly and right.

The Steeler coach, Noll, is a man of single purpose and is honest enough to say, "I'm not aware of the color of his skin, or I don't think I am." Gilliam nods: "He wants to win too bad to let anything interfere." So the coach is right. All of this is to say that in his attempt to become pro football's first outstanding black quarterback, Joe Gilliam is surrounded by reasonable people. His blackness will not weigh heavily against him. A ten-year white veteran, Ray Mansfield, says, "I think the older white guys are really pulling for him. In this age of awareness most of us feel it is time for a black quarterback and then, selfishly, we'd like to see it happen for the sake of team unity." The black veterans watch the situation closely to see, as one says, "if they give him the shaft." But offensive captain John

Brown, a black and perhaps the most widely-respected player on the team, says simply: "The time is right."

And on this sultry July day—the mugginess almost visible as it drifts across the Alleghenies to the Steeler training camp 40 miles east of Pittsburgh—Joe Gilliam hopes it is. It is his first day as a pro. The sun hammers down on the Steeler practice field at St. Vincent College just outside Latrobe, a small town that boasts of Arnold Palmer as a resident and very little else. In the middle of the field Gilliam flees swiftly from an imaginary pass rush, sets up on dancing feet and flicks the ball on a line to a receiver 40 yards away. One flashing, coppery arrow of a pass and questions about his arm disappear. He, in the NFL vernacular, can zing it.

"The thing I like about him is his release; he gets it away very quickly," says Noll, a pleasant, bright man of 40. "He's much further advanced—reading defenses, finding primary receivers—than most young quarterbacks because they use a pro offense at Tennessee State." That potential is evident as another Gilliam pass, delivered with a wicked snap of

the wrist, screams into the hands of a receiver only to leap free and ricochet to the ground. "He has the tools," Noll says.

A question hangs in my mind. Gilliam had sneered when I asked his reaction to being drafted in the 11th round. "I got over it," he had said. "I thought I was a winner. But I can play with any quarterback that graduated last year . . . any quarterback." So I ask Noll why the Steelers hesitated in choosing a passer who had thrown 65 touchdown passes in college, lost only one game in his last two years. "We didn't need a quarterback," he says, irritation on his square, agreeable face. "In the 11th round, he stood out like a sore thumb."

"Only two of our five scouts questioned whether he'd make it, and then only because they wondered if he could stand up under the punishment," says Art Rooney Jr., a Steeler vice president. "Hell, some people thought he was the best quarterback in the country."

In the dining hall following the morning workout, Gilliam eats sparingly. He is rail thin, 6-2 and 179 pounds. Already he has attracted the

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curiosity of the news media, come here to this sylvan glade hard by Arnie Palmer's farmhouse to see the latest Eldridge Dickey. Gilliam is well aware of his uniqueness. "Couldn't I just be a rookie quarterback instead of a black rookie quarterback?" he sighs after the day's fourth interview is arranged.

For all the mundane questions he has already formulated the pat answers which he hopes will hide his fears and feelings. "I've got a lot to learn, I'm hungry to be a pro quarterback; I can't change my color; I try not to think about it; Bradshaw is a fine leader." They drone on, his voice consciously pitched low and even as if to claim that here, reporter, is a little cool, a little self-assurance. I expect to hear that tone often in the days ahead. But, as I later discover, a natural gregariousness prevents Gilliam from bringing off that pose. He is too driven to self-expression to suffer his own sham, tolerate his own armor. For a few moments he maintains the mask, only to suddenly whirl about and confront me with fierce, flashing black eyes and questions without answers. "If I do get a raw deal, what can I do

about it?" he demands in a voice that rises like smoke. "It won't come from the coaches, I know that." Realizing he has fingered his teammates as a possible subversive force, he lets prudence claim his passion. "The players don't have to accept me. . . . I hope they do," he says quietly.

In the first two weeks of camp, Gilliam knows both the agony and the ecstasy of rookiehood. He is fined \$25 for missing a weigh-in when, incidentally or otherwise, his weight has dropped to 170.

In his first camp scrimmage, despite ignoring running plays and forcing many of his passes to receivers who are covered, he completes seven of 11, including a 59-yard touchdown pass that brings a low whistle of respect from his teammates. When he overthrows he beats his hands together, then catches himself, and it is almost possible to see his brain throw ice water on his heart. "I've got my hero," chortles the Steeler publicist as he rushes off to inform the wire services of Gilliam's success. But seven days later, his father and college coach on the sidelines, Gilliam's timing is erratic and in his second scrimmage he knows no success, complet-

ing only one of 11 passes.

"Young quarterbacks always throw a lot," Noll smiles later. "They make an impression quicker that way. He's looking fine. We gave him a big, fast dose of info to see if he would stagger under it and he didn't. We can't wait for young quarterbacks to develop in camp, but he is staying right there for the No. 2 job because he is keeping up. Sometimes he hurries his throws, makes up his mind too soon. When a quarterback comes up here, his accuracy is about as good as it'll ever get. What hurts him is indecision—who to throw to. Joe's learning that now."

A question I had been putting off demands an answer, so I finally ask it: "Are the Steelers ready to accept a black quarterback?"

"The color of his skin's got nothing to do with it," growls Noll, obviously insulted. "We're not doing any favors for anyone. The No. 2 job is open because there is competition for it now. Gilliam has a quicker arm than Hanratty and more potential than Leahy, if he can reach that potential. He's working like hell and so far he's stood out. He's got an opportunity to make the team."

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Standing out becomes more difficult for Gilliam after he has bombed out in the scrimmage. His stomach is bothering him and he seems to get skinnier, bonier, day by day. "Gawd, he isn't as big around as one of Bradshaw's legs," a veteran laughs one afternoon during lunch.

Even Joe Gilliam Sr., in camp for a few days, is worried. "Joey's always been intense, even as a little child," says the father, assistant head coach at Tennessee State. "He always tries to follow a thing through to its conclusion, even if it's detrimental to him. His sophomore year, he was fighting for a regular position and struggling with himself so hard he wasn't playing well. As soon as he was assured the job was his, he changed overnight. We lost one game in two years after he got straightened out."

The Gilliams have lived a quiet, slightly-nomadic life focused on an academic environment. Joe Sr., an articulate, compact six-footer, prides himself on being a teacher and his wife Ruth also teaches. But the Gilliams are among the first families of American sport. Joe Sr. was a fine all-around college athlete. His eldest son, Craig, had a tryout as a defensive back with the Steelers in 1967. Junior Gilliam, the former Los Angeles Dodger star and now a coach, is a distant cousin. As are John Gilliam, a brilliant wide receiver for Minnesota, and Herm Gilliam, an NBA player.

"Joey's pressing. . . . He's not eating," says the elder Gilliam. "He's been sick a major part of the day." Joe Sr. is confident his youngest son can make it as a pro and he is delighted the opportunity has come with the Steelers. "Joe and Noll have great rapport," he says. "Basically Noll is a teacher—I have 45 hours toward a doctorate in education and I know teachers. I don't think that overall pro management is ready for a black quarterback, but the Steelers are."

The son is not certain he is ready for the Steelers several nights later. He is thinking about Saturday's intrasquad game, and the major squad cut that will follow it.

"I think I'm still holding my own," he says softly, studying a milk shake, one of the many he is supposed to drink each week as part of a weight-gaining regimen. Often his speech—soft, clipped and generally articulate—leaves an inescapable impression of

melodramatics. A studied effect. Pseudo-cool. He strokes a wispy goatee which fails to rob his lean face of the strength brought to it by the burning eyes, a Romanesque nose and a cocky, challenging tilt of the head. In toto, he looks like a young riverboat rake.

"I'm learning, oh, so much," he says, quietly but knowingly parading his dedication. But, as it always does, the pose quickly disappears, and for the very first time Joe Gilliam allows a degree of uncertainty to spill into his voice.

"I'm going pretty good . . . I guess," he says, as pensive as a poet at a secluded pond. "You have good days and bad days. I think I'm holding my own. It was heavy at first, the volume, so much to learn." So much to learn: Don't drill it, don't loft it. . . . "A full pivot on that hand-off, Joe." . . . On the AQ pattern, always look for the tight end first. . . . Is that a reverse zone? . . . "Follow through on the pitch, Joe." So much to learn. I think of Steeler quarterback coach Babe Parilli huddling with Gilliam that afternoon and later saying, "He's got a long way to go, but so did Bradshaw when he came here." And Noll admitting, "We may be forced into a decision by the time factor, before any decision is clear-cut."

Later that night Gilliam pores over the old Steeler game films that almost consume him. Down the hall two Steeler quarterbacks are sleeping, a third is playing poker. Gilliam's eyes are red-rimmed. "I want to be prepared as well as it is possible to be prepared," he says, yawning. "You study a defensive back. How does he play the game? Does he come up quick on the sweep? What will he do under such-and-such conditions? What about underneath coverage—where are their linebackers going to be? You look at film from our practices. What could I have done to get the ball there—step up, quicker release? When an idea comes to me, I've got to see about it right then, no matter what time it is. Now, not later. Learning. That's what being a pro quarterback is all about."

When Gilliam enters the intrasquad contest between the offense and the defense, he completes a 49-yard pass on his very first play. But obviously nervous, he then overthrows three straight times, the last one a bullet that goes five feet over the head of a

receiver wide-open in the end zone. Still he finishes eight-for-15, moves the offense, and outshines the competition.

The Turk, that mythical figure of gloom who notifies the players they've been dropped from the roster, stalks the dorm the following night. He does not visit Gilliam, who was listening for his footsteps. "Man, I'm glad I'm going," sighs a relieved rookie. "A guy has to be crazy to live with the pressure." Gilliam, agrees: "You can feel it." But he is an uneasy survivor. "My passing wasn't on," he moans about the most recent scrimmage. "When I missed that one in the end zone I was mad, screaming mad. Hell, if I would've gotten it down, I still threw the thing so damn hard he wouldn't have caught it. I was pressing."

He is pressing a week later as Leahy, replacing an injured Bradshaw in the second quarter, surgically guides the Steelers to a 22-3 dissection of the Giants in their exhibition opener. Noll has decided Gilliam's debut will come the following Saturday in Seattle against the New York Jets.

"I wanted to play, badly," Gilliam says in a Seattle hotel room less than 24 hours before his NFL baptism. He knows the questions about his future remain unanswered. If he is a prospect, he is also a suspect. His passing has been both impressive and imprudent, his play selection undisciplined, his ballhandling adequate but inartistic, his ability to survive physically debatable. For all of his work, and for all of the Steelers' thinly disguised eagerness to make his trial impeccably fair, Joe Gilliam is an unknown quantity. And on this night again his intrinsic honesty destroys his attempt to cloak himself in protective rhetoric.

"I'm not having any difficulties; I'm ready," he says. No difficulties. Other than fear and uncertainty. "Yeah, I have doubts," he admits. "Not about my abilities, about my future. I feel a lot of things I can't explain. Nothing detrimental to anyone. Bad vibrations. I wonder if I can truly be accepted."

"You having trouble, a racial thing?" I ask him.

"I feel I can deal with complex personalities, but I don't think that me being a black quarterback will ever leave anyone's mind. And that's what I am. A black quarterback."

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"Are you getting a fair shake here?"

"I can't evaluate that because it's not over yet. I don't think the players feel I'm a novelty now, and that's a good feeling. I can instill confidence in these guys, and I know they have confidence in me. But I have to have the good games. This is my first one. I'm excited, scared, a little anxious. I like to do well. . . . I hope I do well. . . . I think I can."

But liking, thinking, hoping don't get it done, and after the Steelers score on passes by Bradshaw on the first three plays and go on to zap the Jets, 22-3, the jury is still out on Joe Gilliam. Playing the second half, he has good moments. Despite two completions nullified by penalties, he is six-for-16 for 66 yards. Fumbling on his first series, he recovers to handle the ball well. He sets up quickly in the pocket and stands rooted against a Jet blitz that puts marks on him. But there are not-so-good moments. He is called for intentional grounding and, forcing the ball to covered receivers, he is intercepted once. In eight series, he does not once move the Steelers with consistency. It is an inconclusive test and when it is over he crosses the hall to talk briefly with the quarterback he most admires, Joe Namath, perhaps looking for encouragement, which Namath gives him.

As the Steeler charter slips silently through the night sky enroute to Pittsburgh, Gilliam is animated. "I wasn't too nervous," he begins, but he is snatched by his omnipresent conscious. "The truth of the matter is I was too anxious to prove myself. But, yeah, I think I can play. I always knew what coverage they were in. If there was a good thing about the game, it was my reading. I could've been better. Next time I will."

At the front of the airplane, Noll is understanding of a rookie's nervousness, his inadequacies. "He settled down and threw well," Noll says. "The thing I liked was that he knew what the hell was going on out there. That's a good sign for a young quarterback. He needs more work and he'll get it."

But the time for a rookie's opportunity to prove himself is rapidly disappearing and Noll has other concerns. Bradshaw reinjures his knee slightly the following week in a 31-17 romp over Atlanta and Hanratty plays

excellently, increasing the pressure on Gilliam and Leahy. "Bradshaw needs more work to get ready and he gets priority," Noll says. "We'll probably get to the final exhibition game before we decide about our quarterbacks."

Parilli, who will have a voice in the decision, is blunt but encouraging. "Gilliam is a prospect, but I don't think he is ready to be a No. 2 quarterback yet. There is a lot to learn."

So Gilliam waits and learns and wonders. "I used to think about what I would do if I had to go home," he says, with Noll's decision only days away. "Now I don't think about it. I can perform as well as anyone if I know what to do. And I'm learning that. I think that I can make this team."

Six days, one short burst of excellence and two missteps by Leahy later, he does make the team. In the lone series he played against Baltimore in Tampa, Gilliam "put it all together." For the first time he seemed self-assured and exuded that air of majesty that successful quarterbacks almost always have, and he coolly guided the Steelers 80 yards in nine plays for their only touchdown in a 16-13 loss. Eluding Colt linemen by thrusting himself forward into the pocket and throwing point blank over the shoulder of a rampaging Bubba Smith, Gilliam fired a 49-yard strike that buried itself in the midriff of tight end Larry Brown at the Baltimore 16. After completing his third straight pass of the drive, Gilliam skipped lightly around the right side on a nine-yard bootleg to score.

But it wasn't just Gilliam's success that assured him of a place on the team. It was also Leahy's failure in a key situation. Quarterbacking the Steelers late in the game, Leahy threw two intercepted passes, which handed Baltimore a final-second win.

Leahy was put on the waiver list. And that meant Gilliam had, at worst, a berth on the taxi squad. No unemployment lines for Gilliam this season.

"I was confident I could move the team," Gilliam said later. "Maybe it's the universal feeling all quarterbacks have. We have our aces and we believe. Maybe that's not all of the battle, but it sure is part of it."

The first trial of a black rookie quarterback, seeking success where there had been little but failure, was over. ■

CLAUDE HUMPHREY

(Continued from page 55)

into about 14 fights" that year, and even got himself a bit of a reputation by popping off to the great Johnny Unitas. ("I was walking past him and said, 'I'm gonna run you out of this league, Unitas,' and he blinked and told me, 'You've got two chances: slim, and none.'") By the time the season ended the Falcons had been just as hopeless as ever, finishing 2-12, but Humphrey had been named Rookie-of-the-Year on defense.

Since that first year, there has been nothing but steady improvement. Humphrey played in 38 straight Falcon regular-season games before being injured seriously enough to sit one out, showing a durability that will serve him well as he continues toward his goal of being the best in his brutish specialty. Van Brocklin flatly states that Atlanta has "the two best defensive ends in the business" in Humphrey and John Zook. "Claude keeps on maturing every game, keeps on learning the little things, and he is already, in my opinion, a great defensive end."

A lot of ink was used up around the country spreading the story of Humphrey's needling Unitas (Van Brocklin immediately told Humphrey to keep his mouth shut on the field), but the story did show the real side of the man. Claude Humphrey loves life. Football is fun to him, as it is to anyone who might be digging ditches somewhere if not for the opportunity to play the game for a living. His biggest single thrill came during the last game of the '69 season when he ran 24 yards with a Minnesota fumble to score and give Atlanta a 10-3 victory, but when you get right down to it Claude Humphrey loves every minute of the game.

"Yeah, that got me in a little trouble with Van Brocklin, all that talking, but sometimes I can't help myself," he says. "Heck, I didn't think anything about it. Back at Lester High and Tennessee State, we were always talking back and forth. Football's fun. Just a game. It's not all that serious." Only when he goes looking to sack the rival quarterback, which he did 14 times last year (tying Zook on the last game by downing poor Archie Manning four times). "That's more of a science than you'd think," Humphrey laughs. "I still feel like I've got a lot of little things to learn, and most of 'em have to do with learning the guys you're

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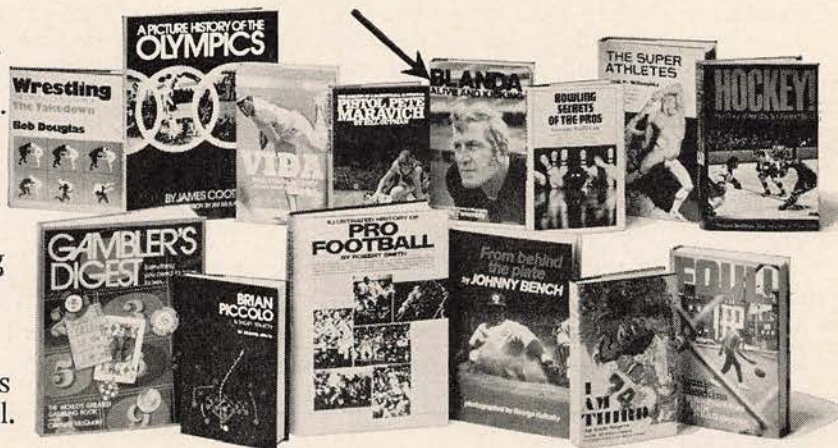
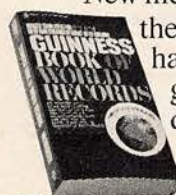
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up against. You have to get out there and try to crash on 'em before you can learn; that's the only way." The pro game, he feels, hasn't been what he had expected. "It's not as physical or even as rough as college, to me. You've got to *think* more."

To the people around Humphrey—the other Falcons, the coaches, the regular sportswriters—Humphrey shares a unique position with Tommy Nobis. They are the heavyweights, the proven ones, the invincibles who will seemingly always be there when needed. The superstars, if you will. "Old Claude's a character sometimes," says one Atlanta television broadcaster, "like one time we wanted to do a little ten-second interview with him and we wound up doing 15 minutes he got so turned on." Van Brocklin says, lovingly, that he is "a big overgrown kid at heart," but proudly adds that his man is "a good ambassador for pro football." His habits off the field appear to be impeccable, held to doing his work at the community center and spending huge amounts of time with his pretty childhood-sweetheart wife and their two daughters. He is more likely to be seen wearing a T-shirt and

blue jeans than dashing around town in the sort of mod garb many pro athletes have adopted these days. He does not smoke, and whenever he has a beer he makes sure nobody is watching "because it's bad for a kid to see that."

Life hasn't really changed that much for Claude Humphrey since becoming a genuine NFL superstar. He now earns around \$40,000 a year, but this has simply helped relieve the pressures that he grew up with—the daily scramble to scrape up enough money to get along on—rather than send him off on wild spending sprees. Last spring he spent time in the yard of the house in Nashville, planting a few tulip bulbs and some bushes. He even does some of the cooking and cleaning around the house, he says, since he was brought up to help out at home. Very little extra has come his way, financially, since making the All-Pro lists; and if it did, he isn't sure what he'd do with the money.

"Surely you're investing some money," I said to Humphrey after a long sweaty practice, as the Falcons edged up a short bank toward their preseason dressing rooms.

"I've bought a little property. Not

much."

"Just drawing interest on savings, then."

"That's about it."

I told him that sounded curious, that on a good salary like he is making he should be able to find some good places to put his money away for those days when he's not pulling in \$40,000 a year. He nodded as though he agreed, but then grew pensive. "When a man's never had anything, and finally gets something, he becomes afraid he's going to lose it. I've thought about that some. Maybe it's silly. But that's the way I was brought up and that's the way I feel. I want to be sure I leave something for my girls." He said he had to hurry to shower and eat, rumbling along the grassy campus toward the gymnasium like a panther on the prowl, with curious townspeople and Furman summer students pointing and ogling at him.

An hour later, as was his ritual following the evening meal, he stood at the edge of an idyllic lake behind the Falcon dormitory and silently fed the swans from a loaf of bread he had bought at a country grocery store. ■

BILLY CUNNINGHAM

(Continued from page 79)

to school here and I've always considered this my second home."

After the courts had shocked Billy by ruling that his contract with the Cougars had precedence over the one he had signed with Philadelphia—that is, when he could do nothing about it—he experienced a sudden change of heart. "I weighed all the factors. All of a sudden I realized, hey, this is a great chance for me. I'm really looking forward to playing here. Really."

I'm sure he was also looking forward to having his meal interrupted by the leathery faced man who said, "I-don't-want-to-interrupt-your-dinner-but-I've-been-a-fan-of-yours-for-years-and-my-sister-knows-your-wife's-parents-and-welcome-home." The man then asked a stupid question. Billy just smiled and replied that, yes, his suspicions that Jerry West is a great ballplayer were very well founded.

If you don't mind doing PR work then perhaps it ceases to be PR work.

After the leather face vanished, Billy continued, speaking slowly, thoughtfully, avoiding all the Knute

Rockne Handbook cliches. "My father wanted me to go to school here. He wanted me to get away but not too far away. Besides, he knew Frank McGuire, a Brooklynite, who was the coach here then." Billy's father is the Assistant Chief of the New York City Fire Department. He never encouraged Billy in the direction of sports, but Billy started playing ball when he was presented with a basketball on his fifth birthday.

The message in the Cunningham family was *succeed*. "My father always appreciated the value of a good education. After sending my two sisters and my younger brother to college both my mother and my father are now taking evening courses at Brooklyn College. The emphasis at home was always placed on academics—which was secondary in my life for a long time. Hey, not even that, probably a poor fourth. But I did get my degree from North Carolina."

To a kid growing up in the inner city it was sports that counted. "There's a hoop every two blocks in Brooklyn and there's always somebody there—and there's nothing else

but the streets." A basket may be bent all out of recognition, there may be a fence immediately in back of it or some dog may have used the foul line as a toilet—and, of course, skinning a knee on cheap concrete almost requires a graft—but Billy was forced to make do with what he had. (Practice makes perfect: Now he is making do with Greensboro.)

What ticks him off, remembering his early basketball days, is that the situation doesn't have to be this way. "There are no readily available facilities for other sports in New York—the gyms are closed in the summer, baseball and football fields are inaccessible and there are fences around the schoolyards! This is unbelievable. Kids have tremendous energy and if the opportunities to work this out in something constructive are not there, then there are other outlets—like gangs and dope—which are always around.

"It's just a shame," Billy says. "I've done some work with ghetto kids, but Wali Jones is the guy to speak to."

Wali means "friend" in Arabic. "It's always been my name," Jones

says, "but people have just been spelling it wrong (Wally)." He works out of a group called "Concerned Athletes in Action Against Drug Abuse" which helps all kids with drug problems, white and black. Wali's Athletes have centers in Milwaukee, Philadelphia and Muncie. "I'm glad to get this in," says Billy, "because they always need money and commercialization, hyping—whatever you want to call it. It's worth it if people can dig what Wali's into. I mean, I see the junkies and I know that I could have wound up like that too—a couple of my high school teammates did."

But growing up and playing ball in New York had its advantages. Larry Brown, also weaned in Brooklyn schoolyards, is quite positive about this. "Being a good park ballplayer in New York City is like being All-City or All-State in Omaha. The competition is so much tougher in New York. Possession is so much more important; if you lose a game, you don't play for two hours, so you have to get a good shot. City players can do more things without the ball and they can sublimate themselves to the ultimate goal of winning."

Larry may lapse into "coach-ese" occasionally but he knows what he's talking about. You take a bad shot in the schoolyards and you get a reputation as a gunner—and nobody wants to play with you. If you're a rebounder then that's all you do; if you're a playmaker, you stay away from the boards—it's as simple as that. It's a brutal way to get to know your limitations, but it works.

Billy echoes much of what his coach has to say. "Ballplayers who grew up in New York are better drivers than other pros, simply because there are no nets in the playgrounds, and with the wind and everything, it's very hard to shoot accurately."

There are also great coaches in New York: Mickey Fisher, the founder of the Boys High dynasty; Bernie Kirshner, Billy's coach at Erasmus; Hank Jacobson; Jaimey Moscovitz. They're all part of the residue of the Thirties and Forties in New York when basketball was predominately a Jewish game. "They're just great on fundamentals and they would work us to death—kick us in the ass, curse us—anything to motivate us."

But despite these pre-Lombardi hearts of steel, chicken soup flowed in their veins. "The coaches also had a great affection for their kids and

you just can't forget them. Bernie Kirshner and I are partners in a camp in New Jersey—Millroad Day Camp—and I can't begin to count how many times he threw me off the team."

It was worth all the grief because basketball is a way of life in New York. "We would play five games in one day—at Eighth Street in the Village, then to Coney Island and on to Manhattan Beach. Kids don't do stuff like that anymore. Maybe that's why city ball is dying."

Billy was All-City all through his stay at Erasmus and even though he had decided on North Carolina during his junior year he still was offered 75 to 80 scholarships. He averaged over 30 a game during his senior year and he scored 61 points once.

From there Billy went on to the

green, rolling hills of UNC. He got to know all the jocks there, and "Ham" (as he was affectionately known) is still on call to pick up the tab for a club sandwich drowned in ketchup and a beer at any given time. At least he did for an ex-UNC football player who red-dogged our dinner. Putting a huge paw on Billy's shoulder he roared a greeting: "Ham, old buddy! How are ya! Come into the Zebra Lounge when you're finished here."

Billy shrugged a perhaps and tried to change the subject: "What're you doing these days?"

"Coaching football—never would have guessed it, huh?" Billy's old buddy replied, sitting down at our table with a beer, sandwich and a check. "Hey, did you hear about the tackle we lost to Duke? The governor,

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a big Duke man, got the kid's hometown to pave the road his house is on. Pretty dirty, huh?"

"That's a bitch," said Billy, wiping ketchup off his sleeve.

Red-dog looked at the check, smiled at Billy, and after threatening to touch up old times later on, he dove back into the Zebra Lounge.

The fall of '61, when Billy got to Chapel Hill, McGuire was gone and Dean Smith took over as basketball coach. Billy didn't cut his ties with his college coach either. "Dean is still a very dear friend," Cunningham says. "I intend to do some recruiting for him, that's how much I think of him. He helped prepare me for life and he made me see that the life of a college athlete is really a fantasy world. I mean, everybody caters to you so much."

After being an All-America in his junior year, Billy participated in the 1964 Olympic trials. There he ran into something he hadn't been prepared for—politics. "Some guys just didn't get much playing time—like me and Rick Barry and Howie Komives who led the country in scoring. I remember the coach from Utah played his boys all the time; Wooden did the same thing."

Billy failed to make the team, and this was a downer for him. The following year he wanted to make up for this by doing well in The University Games (an international competition for university students). But there were bad vibes between Billy and coach John Kundla. "He probably felt that he had better ballplayers—which was certainly conceivable," Billy admits. "People like Bill Bradley and Lou Hudson were there." Sitting on the bench left its scars, however. Billy wasn't sure he could compete with the pros. He was actually leaning toward playing AAU ball; the job security appealed to his father. But Philadelphia named Cunningham as their No. 1 pick in 1965. A bonus of \$15,000 was gently wafted past Billy's nose and the AAU was forgotten.

"I really had questions about my own ability, but I did well in training camp and I had a good rookie season." Typically, Billy doesn't know his own stats for that year, but they were 14.3 points and eight rebounds a game—good enough for him to be selected to the All-NBA Rookie team. Since then, Cunningham has been

chosen three times as a first team forward on the All-NBA team.

The next year was Philly's championship year. "Playing in the old Madison Square Garden as a high school player was the first great thrill I ever had," Cunningham recalls, "but being the champs, man, that was the greatest feeling in the world. Look how long it took West to do it and I was lucky enough to win it when I was only 22. I was the sixth man on the team, but the three forwards—Chet Walker and Luke Jackson started—they split the time equally depending upon who had the hot hand. In the middle was Wilt, and Wali Jones and Hal Greer were the guards. I was so out of it that when they put me in front of the cameras after we won, all I could think of was to say hello to my wife."

There will be other championships for Billy—superstars are winners and Billy is one of the five best forwards ever to play the game, few dispute this. But why is he so great? What is his game all about? Wali Jones has never been timid about saying what he believes and over the phone from Milwaukee he offered an answer: "West and Billy are the only two whites who play like brothers. They just react to the game. You can't predict what they're going to do, man."

Naturally, the conversation got around to Pete Maravich, and Wali—knowing that the tape was on—had the courage to say what a lot of other players say, but not for publication. "Maravich has just made a career of copying what blacks have always been doing—and he's still learning. But he's white and it's a white media and that's where the ink is and where the bread is. The cat's a good ballplayer, but he's too studied. He still can't make those unknown moves that a Pearl or a Cunningham can. Underneath the mechanics, the cat is still straight up-and-down." So now maybe you know why the black ballplayers resent Maravich. They feel he's the Frankenstein created by his father, the coach. You can hear the clicks as he moves. You can see the seams on his body.

They don't see seams on Billy Cunningham. Playing in the schoolyard helped develop this "black" style but Billy admits that there were other factors. "I played with blacks constantly. In Brooklyn—everywhere, as a matter of fact—the best ballplayers are black. A lot of the whites

I played with gradually lost their interest in playing ball while mine kept growing so my game just developed naturally. Black basketball means reacting to the situation spontaneously, getting into the flow of a particular game and letting it carry you along with it." What about Wali's "unknown moves"? "Well, sometimes when I go to the hoop someone's there to block my shot, so I have to bring the ball down and pump and extend myself a little more and bring it to another direction to make a better shot. But I don't know exactly what I'm going to do until it's done, you know?"

By this time, the pageant, spectacle and general hilarity of the Zebra Lounge was threatening to overflow into the restaurant so we adjourned to Billy's room.

As he re-lit his cigar every 30 seconds, Billy discussed his famous temper tantrums. "I play my hardest all the time. If I didn't it would eat something out of me. I just get so involved that I have to relieve my feelings. Sometimes it costs me 50 bucks a shot, but my wife has promised she's going to buy a new dress for every technical I get so I'll have to start cutting down. But the point is that the other players and the officials know what I'm going through, and I understand how they have to treat me." This is very characteristic of Billy; he quietly sizes up a situation from every side and then comes to terms with it. Because of this ability, Billy's life is relatively uncomplicated. He has learned to accept almost joyfully what he can't change. This serenity certainly provides a sharp contrast with the image Billy communicates on the court—hustling, always in motion, screaming at the officials.

Now that the automatic fine from the NBA is no longer a threat, Cunningham is free to speak his mind about officiating. "NBA officials are simply inept," he says. "They anticipate too much. Like sometimes I go up for a shot and it's very obvious that I've been fouled, but the whistle doesn't blow. Later when I complain, they say that they thought I would make the basket so they didn't call the foul. That's ridiculous! The game is just too fast and sophisticated to try and regulate it that way."

"Speaking of sophistication," I ask him, "what about the brand of pro ball played down here in Greens-



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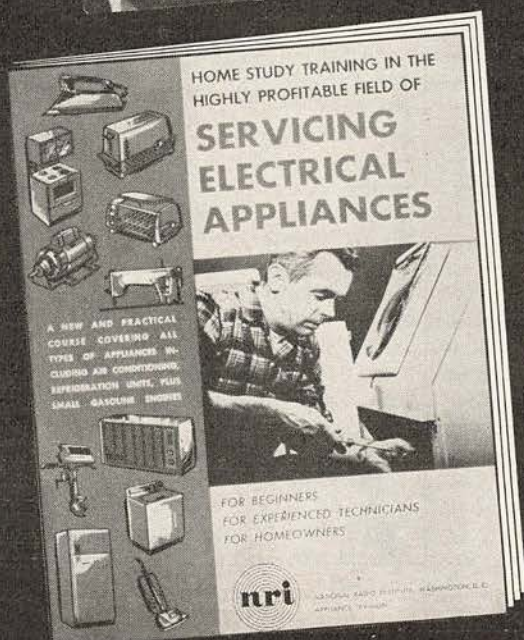
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boro? Is it true that the ABA stole their basketballs from the seals at the County Fair?"

"Don't be so quick to put the ABA down," Bill chides. "Let's face it, the NBA is the superior league, but we'll catch up. There are old established veterans in the NBA while most of the players here are 25 or 26. To them the ABA is just an extension of college."

"You need those older players to learn how to hold and grab on defense," Billy says. "You spend a season watching a DeBusschere playing and you go against him in practice and you learn by osmosis. You mature quickly."

It wasn't too long ago that the NBA was a wild, reckless, helter-skelter league. It used to be that the fast break was the only offense besides some one-on-one or a little pick-and-roll stuff. "But their game became more sophisticated," Cunningham explains. "And it will happen in the ABA also. You'll see more zone presses and sagging zones here this season. All the good NBA clubs play this way—New York, Chicago, Los Angeles—and even Milwaukee was starting to get it together last year. It's less strenuous on the players and it cuts down on the percentage shots."

There is another way Billy feels that the gap can be closed: Get rid of the three-point play. "The three-point play is just bad basketball—it catches your teammates off balance," Billy says. "It makes it tough going to the offensive boards, which makes it that much easier on the defense. If you miss a shot like that it's usually a long rebound and the change from defense to offense is very quick. You miss and the defense is on the break already." But what about the fan appeal? Billy says pointedly: "The fans like it if it goes in."

But Cunningham will adjust to the three-point play, just as he's adjusted to being a phantom superstar. Aside from a TV commercial where Cunningham shaves with just "worta," his face is seen as rarely as his name is mentioned in the press. Sometimes he has to study the boxscores to make sure he's still playing. "No press is better than a bad press—and I've never had that," he says. "But the players know me even if the public doesn't. Acceptance from the guys I play against is the important thing to me. When DeBusschere says that I'm the toughest he's played, that's a great

feeling." Billy will be pleased in any case when he discovers that his picture appears on the Cougar's season ticket brochure—something (if their attendance holds true to lowly form) that literally tens of people will eventually see.

The one aspect of Billy's game that doesn't merit peer acceptance is his defense, and he is well aware of this. "I should play better defense—and I'm not using this as an excuse, but there are other things asked of me." Last year, despite a back injury, Billy led the 76ers in points (23.0), rebounds (12.2) and assists (6.0) as well as minutes played.

"It's hard to sustain your concentration on defense," he says. "I find that my head is sometimes already back at the other end of the court. But I feel I can play good team defense, and against a big, strong forward it's more than adequate. But a quick forward—like Bradley—who moves and uses picks well, gives me trouble. I instinctively try to get into position to get the rebound and I don't pressure him as much as I should."

So you see, Billy can accept and adjust to his own short-comings as well. But in other ways Billy Cunningham's accommodating days may be over; he comes "home" to North Carolina not as a naive Brooklyn kid seeing the world for the first time and seeking some ties with his familiar past. He arrives this time with a quarter of a million dollar contract, as the owner of a successful day camp and a string of apartment buildings in Miami Beach, and with the reputation of being one of the best in his profession. True, "old buddies"—like Red-dog—are still old buddies, but now these people will have to come to him.

Billy has been around since last he saw Rebel country; he's even been to a Rolling Stone concert. "Unbelievable," he says. "I've never seen anybody like Mick Jagger. I had to stand almost through the whole concert but it was worth it. What a performer." It's clear that Billy's world is not bounded by Coney Island, Manhattan Beach and East New York anymore. In recognition of this, after Billy dropped me off at the airport, I laid my new *Rolling Stone* Magazine on him—even though I hadn't finished it. He was scheduled to leave for Philly in the morning. I hope he was able to smuggle it across the North Carolina state line. ■

JACK NICKLAUS

(Continued from page 73)

to examine the label of a new diet soft drink. I wondered what kind of man could care about the contents of a diet drink when he was so absorbed with his Magnificent Obsession: Winning the Grand Slam. It turned out to be one of those rare moments of leisure Nicklaus ever allows himself during a PGA, Masters, U.S. Open or British Open. Normally, he is hypnotized with tunnel vision.

He was still wearing that tunnel-vision stare when he came riding up to the press tent two months later at Augusta National Golf Club. He had lost the Masters—and a chance at the Grand Slam—by two strokes to Charles Coody, who had the audacity not to choke when Nicklaus charged.

Only 31 then, with his Magnificent Obsession left behind in the dogwoods and azaleas of Augusta National, Nicklaus had to shift his attention to second most important goal of his golfing life: Winning two more major championships to tie Bobby Jones' record of 13.

In search of his 12th, in June of 1971, Nicklaus walked down the first fairway of Merion Golf Club near Philadelphia in an 18-hole U.S. Open playoff with Lee Trevino. He had now trimmed down his once-pudgy torso and was wearing mod-length hair, but Jack Nicklaus still did not have the image to go with his superb golf game. He was booed that day in Philadelphia, where they once booed the Easter Bunny; but on top of that, he lost the playoff to plump Lee Trevino.

In December 1971, the night before the Disneyworld Open, which would cinch the year's money-winning title for Nicklaus with a record \$244,490, he spoke of the impetus that had reignited his desires to excel at golf after suffering a three-year spell of no major titles. Golf hadn't been fun, he explained, and he really hadn't cared about playing the game, although it was his livelihood.

"Then my father got ill," he said, "and I knew he wasn't going to live very long. So I went out to win as many tournaments as I could for him."

In January, 1970, Nicklaus shot a 65 in the final round of the Crosby at Pebble Beach, California, and lost by one stroke. His father died shortly thereafter.

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Charlie Nicklaus was a Columbus, Ohio, pharmacist who taught his son to fish, gave him an appreciation for Ohio State football, golf and humility.

At age ten, Jack walked with his father around Scioto Country Club and when young Nicklaus began to show an interest in the game, Charlie gave his boy a lesson from Columbus pro Jack Grout. In June, 1950, Jack toured nine holes at Scioto in 51. In his first competitive tournament, the Scioto Junior Championship, he took 121 blows, good enough to win.

Twenty-two years later, in July of this year, Jack Nicklaus II, also age ten, shot 86 but did not win the Scioto Junior Championship, with only one lesson from Columbus pro Jack Grout. He had kept his father after hours at Pebble Beach in June, hitting two or three buckets of practice balls in the cool evenings. Jackie tuning up for Scioto, Jack tuning up for the U.S. Open.

It's getting to where Barbara Nicklaus is torn between her two golfing Jacks. Upon her arrival at Westchester Country Club during the second round of the Westchester Classic this

August, Mrs. Nicklaus didn't know whether to run to a telephone and find out how Jackie did in his tournament, or check the leader board for hubby's score. She chose Jack Sr.'s fate first and found him one shot behind unknown Dwight Nevil. That night, Jack and Barbara phoned Jackie only to discover his tournament had been rained out.

"How did you play?" Jack asked his son.

"Well dad," he said, "I triple bogied the first hole. I bogied the second one . . . but I was gonna birdie the third when it started raining." The unflinching optimism pleased his father immensely.

Jack Jr. was never encouraged to play golf—he chose to. Jack Sr. was encouraged. He broke 70 for the first time at age 13 and was Ohio state Open champion at 16. But his father Charlie was always there to remind Jack of the incredible record amassed by Bob Jones. At 28, Jones had won the Slam (his version was the British and U.S. Opens, British and U.S. Amateurs). Somehow, the name of Bobby Jones has always meant humility to Jack Nicklaus.

It is February, 1972 at the Jackie Gleason Inverrary Classic in Lauderhill, Florida. At the 72nd hole, Jack Nicklaus is lining up a putt with enough concentration to bring the hole to the ball. All visual images are obliterated, all noises mute as he leans over the nine-footer. Suddenly a single-engine plane overhead cuts its motor and the abrupt silence breaks Nicklaus' train of thought. He backs off the putt and stares skyward, resumes his stance and rims the cup, missing. First prize money of \$52,000 goes to Tom Weiskopf, a fellow Ohio State golfing alumnus. Jack had programmed for noise, but not for silence.

Two months later he is back at Augusta National and once again during Masters week, remote control takes over Jack Nicklaus' body. He takes the lead on Thursday and never loses it. In the clubhouse, he cuts short the questions of the writers who swarm around him.

I last saw him being escorted in the dark to the Augusta National Clubhouse by a Masters official as some large-breasted girl was doing her damndest to convince him that

he should join her.

Probably no other athlete ever controlled his destiny like Jack Nicklaus. With the exception of winning the Grand Slam, Nicklaus has attained all the peaks of golfing greatness, including the most money earnings (\$1.7 million).

This he attributes to his ability to set his own playing schedule. Unwavering to sponsor pressures or media-concocted enticements, Jack has played in no more than 25 tournaments for the past three years. He has won five or more and at least one major title each year. The record shows he won 45 through August, including each of the majors twice, which nobody else has ever done.

He bagged his first U.S. Open at 22 and, despite lapses of occasional self-aggrandizement all athletes must endure, Nicklaus has survived the seduction of fame. His approach to the game is singleminded: To become the very best possible and especially to supersede his paragon, Bobby Jones.

Money never has been, never will be, the prime motivator of Jack Nicklaus. He could have possibly become the first \$400,000 money winner this season—and still might—with a more active playing schedule in the fall. (He was just over \$280,000 through the U.S. Match Play Championship.) But his interests besides winning tournaments include building four golf courses in Japan, completing his dream course in Columbus, watching the Miami Dolphins play football, playing tennis, fishing and enjoying his family—not necessarily in that order.

He has attained a pinnacle in his sport equivalent to a Namath or an Ali. Of course, Nicklaus has lacked the flamboyance of the New York Jet quarterback or the deposed heavyweight champion; but he has also escaped the repugnance. Namath and Ali came into their games with ostentatious flair, both espousing verbal testimonies to their own abilities. Nicklaus came out of his cocoon only about two years ago and the metamorphosis is just now catching up; only since July has he begun to have love affairs with his galleries.

He was a chubby kid from Ohio who went around pummeling the matinee idol of the fairways, Arnold Palmer, with cold and efficacious technique. He had what they call "low profile" among the press, and his

wardrobe contained all the color of a hospital ward.

Somewhere back there Jack Nicklaus had a shape-in session with himself. He lost about 20 pounds, six inches off his hips, and he let his hair grow out. He not only changed his clothing style, he became one of the tour's fashion pace-setters. Young girls started popping up in Jack's Pack. And when it was called to Mrs. Nicklaus' attention, she remarked: "I think the girls are beginning to notice Jack; and I think Jack is beginning to notice the girls are noticing."

With the new physical image came a more relaxed, extroverted and people-minded Jack Nicklaus. His fetish for exactitude had made him out to be a computer, but the metamorphosis proved internal as well as external. He began joking with the gallery and tossing out anecdotal fodder to the press.

He developed presence. "Two years ago I cut a commercial with Jack," said William Waites, a Madison Avenue ad writer who works on the Eastern Air Lines commercials with Nicklaus. "He did okay. But the next year he improved greatly. It's trite to say it, but he's definitely developing charisma."

He walks gingerly down the fairway on his heels, yellow mane shining in the sunlight and posture erect. With a fixed stare he seeks out the ball he has just hit like a hawk searches for its dinner. He is a study in concentration as he paces off the distance to a marker or throws up a handful of grass to get wind direction or studies every blade on the green between ball and hole. Jack Nicklaus does not just hit a shot, he designs it first.

He is 5-11½ and his weight now shifts from between 180 to 190, depending whether he is eating lunches that week. He has thick thighs and legs, which account for much of his power, but his shoulders are not big and his hands are so small that he often has to ask Barbara to open jars for him.

He wears a 42 regular sport coat with about 32-inch sleeves. I found that out the night we went to dinner at a Tarrytown, New York, restaurant and I had to borrow a jacket.

The dinner we were going to have was originally scheduled back in May during the Danny Thomas Classic at Memphis and again at the PGA Team Championship at Ligonier, Pennsylva-

nia, in August. Nicklaus has only withdrawn from two tournaments in his career. I was at both of them—Memphis and Ligonier—awaiting his arrival.

The reason he missed Ligonier was an infected finger that required an operation. In the candlelight of the Tarrytown restaurant, Nicklaus unpeeled a flesh-colored band-aid from his right index finger and brandished a small scar between knuckle and nail.

"You know you don't really even need this finger to play golf," he said, taking an interlocked backswing and extending his index from the shaft of the imaginery club. "I wanted to play at Laurel Valley because I needed another week with the bigger American ball after the British Open. But the doctors said no."

Losing the PGA was rather anticlimactic, however, for Lee Trevino had already dashed any hopes of the Grand Slam; Jack says he was going for the "American Slam"—Masters, U.S. Open and PGA—since nobody had ever won them all three in a single year.

The aficionados began to groove on him, however, back in June after he won the U.S. Open. Had he won the British Open instead of Lee Trevino, there was talk of heightening the fence around Oakland Hills in Birmingham, Michigan, to keep the zealots away from Jack in the PGA.

One could not blame Nicklaus if he did not like Trevino. After all, Lee has short-circuited his Slam bid for two straight years. In fact, however, Jack is most grateful for something Trevino did the week following the British Open. When Nicklaus came up with the infected finger and couldn't play in an important exhibition at Cincinnati, Trevino consented to substitute for him. The Golden Bear did not forget it.

And any scars from the British Open were soothed over by an experience that touched Nicklaus so deeply he wept. Jack Nicklaus, the computer, actually wept. He had just taken the lead on the tenth hole of the final round; going into the 11th at Muirfield, where spectators lined the entire hole four and five deep, Nicklaus hit his second shot on the par four to within five feet. As he was walking to the green, the crowd responded with a tumultuous roar, as if coming out to embrace a deity.

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"It was greater by a thousand times than anything I have ever heard," said Nicklaus, pausing in between bites of his sirloin. "I've never experienced anything like it."

"Jack Nicklaus actually cried?" I asked, putting down a glass of burgundy.

"Well," he said, "I had tears in my eyes."

This was a Tuesday night before the Westchester Classic and Nicklaus, who enjoys an occasional scotch and water or bottle of wine, was careful to pour the most generous portions of burgundy into my glass.

"I'm mentally and physically exhausted," he said. "I'm not going to win here at Westchester because I can't concentrate."

He was still thinking about the tournaments he had *not* won. But he looked upon it as a mixed blessing.

"Maybe I never will win the Grand Slam," he said. "And even if I do, maybe that experience at Muirfield will never be duplicated or topped. But it might have ruined me if I had won it. I'm too young to achieve all my goals now. I've seen many athletes destroyed by achieving their goals too soon."

One dream gone awash on the rocks, Nicklaus now awaits the fulfillment of another. He is building a golf course in Columbus—actually there are reports of as many as three—and it will be called "The New Course at Muirfield."

When he talks about "The New Course at Muirfield," his eyes light up.

"I have every hole photographed in my mind," he says. Sources in Columbus say Nicklaus had dumped all available capital into over 1600 acres of land that will become a development. Though Jack is reluctant to go into details about it, the prospect has become an obsession with him.

At night he rides around surveying his dream by the car headlights.

When completed, Nicklaus' project will include a museum of golf with replicas of all four major championship trophies.

"It's my way of putting back something into the game," he said.

A monument to golf?

"Don't say 'monument,'" he said. "Monuments usually become a financial liability."

Someday they will play a PGA tournament at "The New Course at

Muirfield." Jack Nicklaus hopes it will become the Masters of the North.

For a Thursday morning, the gallery following the threesome around staid, oppressive Westchester Country Club was quite responsive. There were close to a thousand people by the time Jack, Doug Sanders and Mason Rudolph turned the first nine. Nicklaus was four under par, 32, hitting shots that seemed to be drawn magnetically to the flag. He shot 65, tied for second with Steve Melynk, a stroke behind DeWitt Weaver.

"I thought you couldn't concentrate," I said to him in the locker room.

"I don't have to concentrate to make one-foot putts," he said.

After giving a series of interviews, Nicklaus leaves the press room and walks right into the crowd of pencils and pens and papers, out by the terrace and to the locker room. Always moving, always signing. A waitress breaks from the terrace and claws her way through the kids; he will not escape her. He signs.

Once inside the clubhouse, a little girl of about ten with braces on her teeth jumps in front of him: "Will you by a chance on a Mercedes?"

At first ambivalent (he has been asked every day), Nicklaus removes a money clip and pulls out a dollar. He walks away.

"Hey!" shouts the girl, "I need your name and address."

"Put your name on it and maybe you'll win," he says.

"But I want your autograph."

He returns and signs.

At last in the dressing room, he sinks in the olive chair again and I hand him a coke.

"Incredible," I say.

"Incredible, isn't it?" he repeats.

"When did all this start happening?"

"About two months ago. Imagine what would be happening if I'd have won all four."

For his wardrobe on Saturday, Mr. Nicklaus has chosen a pair of cranberry slacks with a blue paisley shirt. Unfortunately, he has gotten a day ahead of schedule on his clothes. Because tomorrow in the New York Times there will be a Hathaway shirt ad with a sketch of Nicklaus in that blue paisley: "This is the shirt Jack Nicklaus will wear today in the Westchester Classic."

"He goofed," says Barbara, who has arrived for the final two rounds.

On the course he looks very mechanical through 16 holes and Barbara dispatches a putting lesson to him on the 16th: "Tell him to keep his head down on the greens."

When Nicklaus sinks a 17-footer for his first one-putt green of the day and a victory-clinching birdie, Mrs. Nicklaus says kiddingly: "See, he minds... sometimes."

"You played conservatively," I told him, bumming a cigaret.

"Conservatively!" he said, offering a light. "I played one of the best rounds of my life. When are you going to learn something about this game?"

"When you teach me," said I, a 20-handicapper.

He then repeated the suicidal tendencies again, walking out into that sea of hunter-seekers.

And then over to the scene at the clubhouse locker. Wall to wall cops, wanting to show somebody their authority, but everywhere they turn seeing a fellow cop.

At 7:49 Jack, Barbara and two friends sped off in a dark green hardtop.

They arrived back at their Lost Tree Village, Florida, home at 2:30 a.m. Jack slept until 10 a.m. when he got a phone call from Dallas; it was a friend of Lee Trevino's saying that Lee was sick and did Jack suppose he could fill in at an American Cancer Society benefit in Deerfield, Illinois? Today? The match was to start at 1:30. Jack arrived at 1:45.

"The plane just wouldn't go any faster," he said. He played three holes with singer Glen Campbell and the rain washed it out. As Jack Jr. would have said, he was probably going to birdie the fourth when it started raining. ■

THE SPORT QUIZ!

ANSWERS

From page 28

1 a. 2 b. 3 c. 4 Cooper—Gehrig; Bendix—Ruth; Caan—Piccolo; Reagan—Gipp. 5 c. 6 True. 7 c. 8 c. 9 a. 10 a. 11 a. 12 True. 13 c. 14 c. 15 b. 16 c.

WHEN WERE YOU LAST REALLY FIT?

AN EXPERT TELLS YOU HOW TO GET BACK IN SHAPE.

Even if you're not particularly interested in building he-man muscles, you owe it to yourself to keep your body fit. It's a sad fact of today's life that many men ignore this point and end up regretting it when they find they've become "old men" long before their time. Thanks to modern exercising techniques, "keeping fit" is now easier than ever. John Texier, Mr. France and leading fitness specialist tells you how.

Q. What does fitness mean?

A. For normally healthy people, fitness is a simple matter of maintaining muscle tone through exercise. In other words—using your muscles often enough and hard enough to keep them healthy and trim.

Q. How does lack of fitness show up?

A. The answer depends on how old you are. If you're still in your teens or early twenties, it's largely a matter of physical development. Young men with pipe-stem arms, caved-in chests, drooping shoulders or bird-like legs aren't fit. When you're a little older the first signs are usually a roll of fat around the middle and a lack of pep and energy. After 40, the whole body tends to become flabby.

Q. Can sports keep me fit?

A. Yes, indeed, if practiced regularly and for long enough periods. Swimming, jogging, gymnastics, tennis, handball, squash, skiing can all help keep you in top condition provided you practice the sport for at least an hour three or four days a week—every week.

Q. Isn't there an easier way?

A. Yes, there's an outstanding home training method which I use and recommend. It's fast, easy and guaranteed to give results.

Q. What's it called?

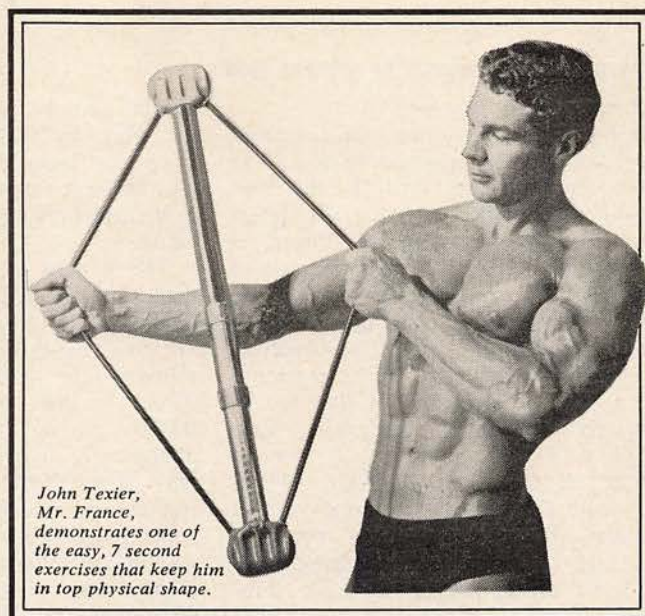
A. Bullworker training. It's based on Isometric techniques which have been proven to increase strength three times faster than sports or conventional calisthenics. In my opinion, it's the most advanced training system on the market today.

Q. How long does it take?

A. The 7-exercise introductory program requires only 70 seconds of exercise per day. The complete advanced training program takes about 5 minutes.

Q. When do the results start?

A. Right from the very first day. The Bullworker is fitted with a built-in measuring device which shows you exactly how much progress you make every day. And the results can be very impressive—up to 4% more strength



John Texier, Mr. France, demonstrates one of the easy, 7 second exercises that keep him in top physical shape.

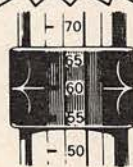
per week, up to 50% improvement in the first three months. I've seen many men go on to double and even triple their strength.

Q. How long does it take to see visible results?

A. From 10 days to three weeks depending on how well you train and how regularly. Each new week brings even more impressive results.

Built-in Powermeter

You can actually measure your musclepower g-r-o-w-i-n-g from the very first day.



Q. But it's hard work, isn't it?

A. Not at all. The whole point of Isometrics is that by "exercising" for only 7 seconds at a time, you avoid the excess muscle strain and fatigue of "crash" training programs which often do more harm than good. Bullworker training is gauged to each user's personal potential.

Q. Is there an age limit?

A. Generally speaking, men between 15 and 65 in good gen-

eral health can expect to benefit from fitness and strength building training. Young men should use Bullworker to improve their muscular development: broad, powerful shoulders—rippling biceps—a deep, manly chest tapering down to a slim waist and hips supported by muscular, contoured thighs and calves.

Men in their thirties should use Bullworker to maintain peak physical form and for toning-up the muscles of their abdomen, chest, shoulders and upper arms. After 2 or 3 weeks you'll probably see muscles you didn't even know you had.

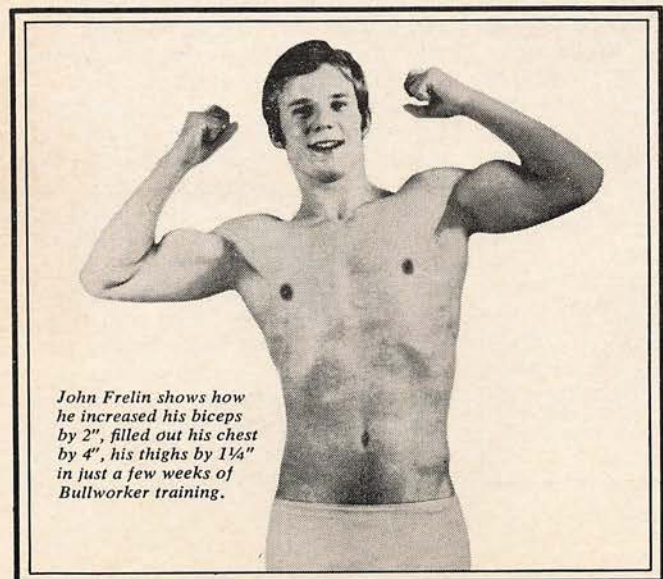
From 45 on, Bullworker should be used to regain and maintain a youthful vigorous body that belies the passing years. I've seen lots of Bullworker users in their fifties with more energy, power, and vigor than many younger men.

Q. How can I find out more about the Bullworker and perhaps actually try it out?

A. I understand that the American distributor is now offering the Bullworker on a two-week free home trial basis in order to give as many men as possible a chance to prove to themselves what an outstanding fitness trainer it is. If you're interested in getting back into shape fast, I recommend you contact the distributor for full details.

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John Frelin shows how he increased his biceps by 2", filled out his chest by 4", his thighs by 1 1/4" in just a few weeks of Bullworker training.

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AL OLIVER: "I SHOULD BE HITTING .400"

(Continued from page 83)

heavy, the kind of surly, ill-tempered loud-mouth the fans are quick to boo for any transgression. "If the fans held a popularity contest to determine the most popular Pirate, I would finish last," says Oliver, in a good-natured if somewhat wan voice.

Fan hostility, like his prowess with a bat, is the truth as Oliver perceives it, so he volunteers the information for what it's worth. Not that the ill opinion of the populace pleases Oliver. On the contrary, it disturbs him, all the more so since, by all accounts, he possesses none of the more obvious failings common among professional athletes. He doesn't drink, smoke, curse or ramble around. "When I first dated Al I was a little leary of him," his wife Donna says. "You know baseball players have the reputation of being fast. But Al's not that way at all. In fact, I've had to give up my social life being married to him. He wants to come home after the ballgame and go to bed to get his rest."

"To give credit where credit is due—that is happiness," Oliver observes, allowing that happiness has largely eluded him in Pittsburgh. It is hard to imagine why, given his statistics and his readiness to talk about himself and baseball. He came up to the major leagues at 23 in 1968 and hit .285 with 17 home runs, good enough to finish in a second-place tie with Coco Laboy as Topps National League Rookie-of-the-Year, by gum. The following year, though platooned, he hit .270 with 83 runs batted in, only two behind the club leader, Willie Stargell. Last year he was platooned again, though winding up with more than 500 at bats for the second year in a row and a .282 average.

Yet, given his own estimate of his abilities, Oliver was unhappy. He demanded to be played regularly or traded. "Pride. I've never seen a ball-player with more pride," says Bob Robertson, who came up with Oliver in the Pirate farm system in places like Gastonia, North Carolina, and Columbus, Ohio.

Oliver has been known to unloosen monumental rages when he fails to get a hit, to heave his bat into the photographers' pen and his batting helmet into the stands. On one occasion recently he hit a towering pop-up to short, which dropped harmlessly to earth in a fielding mix-up. The

official scorer charged an error on the play and Oliver called up the press box from the dugout phone to tell the scorer that if he was "a man" he'd meet him in the tunnel after the game.

The pattern is obvious enough: A man so persuaded of his abilities that anything short of perfection becomes gnawing frustration that cannot be soothed into quiet. In this order of things the gods intervene to position fielders in front of line drives, to be platooned is a personal rebuff, a few boos from the crowd is a fan conspiracy and an idle phrase in a newspaper hints darkly of a cabal against you in the making. Yet, unlike most men whose sensitivity yields more discontent than happiness, Oliver is resilient and bears no sour grudges for what he regards as the indignities of the past. Others can't judge baseball talent as accurately as he can, and, besides, when you live to hit each new turn at bat is a *tabla rosa*.

Still, there is some bitterness underneath the surface. "This year the press has protected Richie Hebner and Bob Robertson," Oliver says. "They do no wrong. You let Al Oliver make an error and it's headlines. I would never let no human being tell me how good I am. I used to have rabbit ears. But now I don't care. The cream rises to the top, I always say, and here I am."

"That's right," Donna Oliver says. "Bob Prince (the Pirates broadcaster) is always saying how Robertson and Hebner give 125 percent, but not Al. It hurts not to get the recognition for dedication. I don't know how many times in the off-season Al went down to the Hill District to talk to kids about drugs. He did it for free. He spent hours and hours there. It perturbed me a little, we had so little time to ourselves. There're kids in here every day by the tens and twenties. But do you ever hear that Al loves kids? It's always some other Pirate. I know why, of course. It's because people

don't like an outspoken athlete who's black."

"Yeah," Al joins in, the resentment bubbling up to the surface now. "I went to Washington to meet President Nixon for my work with drugs and the article in the paper was so small you needed a microscope to read it. I'll tell you now, the only reason nothing derogatory's been said about me this year is there's nothing derogatory to say."

No one would quarrel with that. On a crisp day in early August while Oliver is on his way to Stargell's chicken shack, he leads the Pirates in games played, times at bat, hits and runs. He is a regular, hitting .312 with six home runs and 49 RBIs. Moreover, he has been named to the All-Star team and has just become a father for the first time. In spring training Oliver was asked to pose with Vic Davalillo and Gene Clines for a newspaper photo illustrating the "three candidates" for the centerfield job. Oliver refused and stalked off saying, "I'm not the candidate for centerfield, I'm the centerfielder." To a newspaperman seeking a candid self-evaluation, he said, "I'm 25 and I can do it all."

Such signs of confidence are no longer disquieting to those who regularly follow Oliver and the Pirates. What was somewhat more out of the ordinary was Oliver's hot 1972 start, in which he hit safely in the first 18 games. In the minors and in his first three years in the majors, he was a weak hitter in first half of the season and a torrid one in the second half. At Columbus in his last year of minor-league ball he was hitting around .200 in June and finished the season at .315. The pattern was more or less identical during his first three years with the Pirates, although the discrepancy between the two halves was not quite so pronounced.

Oliver has no ready explanation for the pattern, noting somewhat defiantly, "The final analysis is what counts. How productive have you been at the end of the year? It doesn't matter whether it was a good first half and a bad second half or vice versa. With me the Pirates have been unfair. They used my poor starts as a reason to platoon me, even though people who saw me play knew what kind of a hitter I was. I was dissatisfied not playing regular and I told the press about it. The way I see it, if you don't say nothing,

PHOTO CREDITS

Dan Baliotti and Bob Rush—82. Vernon Biever—14. Martin Blumenthal—20, 57, 58, 60 (top left, bottom left and right). Malcolm Emmons—81. Leonard Kamsler—73. Fred Kaplan—65, 67, 96. Ron Koch—60 (top right). Darryl Norenberg—53. Bob Peterson—70. Don Sparks—68. UPI—25, 28, 30, 58 (2), 69, 79. Wide World—57, 76.



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in the medical profession, over extra growth and height increasing techniques; one man will say "HOG- WASH!" yet another, "YOU CAN ACTUALLY GAIN INCHES" . . .

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you don't get nothing."

The Pirate's regular centerfielder pulls up in front of Stargell's All Pro Chicken shack, where waiting customers get free orders at the moment when Stargell strikes a home run. Oliver has not yet had time to develop any outside business interests of his own, though he says he is vaguely interested in getting into the real estate game. For the moment, he is figuring on how to build his baseball earnings up to \$100,000. He says he's earning around \$40,000 this year and, if some of those line drives start falling in as they should, he foresees an annual \$20-25,000 increment over the next several years.

A man in a blue serge suit waves from the sidewalk and Oliver rolls down the car window. "How's it going, Al?" the man asks.

"Everything's in order," Oliver says with a smile.

"How's that new baby doing? And how's your wife?"

"Everything's in order," Oliver repeats. It's his favorite line these days and will be used several times inside the chicken shop when well-wishers inquire after the Pirates and Oliver's week-old daughter, Felice.

If it has taken Oliver 25 years to come around to that point of view, it's because he's harder to satisfy than most. As his wife puts it: "Al asks a lot from people, but then he gives a lot, too."

Oliver was born on October 14, 1946, in Portsmouth, Ohio, a city of 35,000 people on the Ohio River. His father Albert worked at a brick foundry and had once been a school-boy track star and a member of the Harlem Globetrotters. "As a family we were above average in income," Oliver recalls. "We were a religious family. My dad was a deacon in the Baptist church and my mother sung in the choir. Portsmouth was a good town to come up in. There was some racial prejudice, I guess, but I never felt much of it. I'll tell you, if everyone had my feelings about the races getting along together, there wouldn't be any problem in this country today. As kids we pitched horseshoes, played badminton and softball. Along about the fourth grade I decided I wanted to be a pro basketball player. Basketball was and is my first love. I went out for football one year in high school, but there was too much

blood in it for me.

"My dad was really pushing me, as far as books went. As an athlete I was always the best, or the next to best. I always thought that way. Still do. In the sixth grade my mother Sallie died unexpectedly. I came back from a basketball game and there was a big white emergency truck in front of the house. I went inside and found my mother was dead. She was always heavy upstairs and she could have smothered her heart out. They never knew what killed her exactly. She was 32 and that's no age to be dying of natural causes. It was a tough time my dad had bringing us up. It matured me quick. I was 11 and I had a younger sister and a baby brother who was two. Still, Portsmouth was a good town for kids."

From Little League on, Oliver played basketball and baseball with Larry Hise, formerly of the Phillies and Dodgers. "It was always who was the best," Oliver recalls, "Larry or me. The people liked Larry. They didn't like me. I was outspoken and Larry was humble. He was an outstanding person and an outstanding athlete and now he's in the minor leagues in Albuquerque. I don't know . . . one thing my father taught me was to have great pride in your abilities and maybe Larry didn't have enough confidence in his."

Hise and Oliver were both All-State basketball players. The college recruiters came and not far behind them a scout for the Phillies who discovered both could play baseball as well. In the spring of 1964 Oliver signed a letter of intent at Kent State, where he would receive a basketball scholarship. The Philadelphia scout who'd been courting Oliver went back to the home office to see how much bonus money he could wangle to dissuade Oliver from basketball. "Before he left he warned me not to go to the Pirate rookie tryouts in Salem, Virginia, and, above all, not to sign anything," Oliver recalls in an older and wiser voice.

Nonetheless, Oliver went, figuring that at 17 he was too young to sign a binding document. After Oliver's try-out in Salem, Pirate scout Sid Thrift offered to take Oliver to dinner, and when they got to the restaurant Oliver's father was sitting at the table with a big grin on his face. The Pirates produced a \$4000 bonus contract and the Olivers signed it, only

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to return to Portsmouth where the Phillies belatedly produced a \$25,000 bonus offer. "There is always something happening to take the fun out of this game," Oliver reports.

In any case, Oliver's progress through the Pirates' farm system was placid and steady enough, though he sat out the 1964 season with torn knee cartilage and missed half the 1967 season when he was in the army. He was a first baseman in the minors and according to Pirate teammate Manny Sanguillen, who was with Oliver in Columbus: "They call him Scoop. I know I never see a first baseman better than him. He can scoop up anything."

Oliver had a solid enough minor-league career, hitting .309 at Gastonia in 1965 and .299 in Raleigh the next year. The year he was released from the army Oliver had trouble rounding into shape and after a poor .222 start in Macon was sent back to Raleigh where he wound up batting .297. The next year, in 1968, he jumped up to AAA ball in Columbus.

Johnny Pesky, now a Red Sox broadcaster, was Oliver's manager in Columbus and recalls their initially tempestuous relationship: "Ollie was using a 40-ounce bat, swinging from his heels and hitting .200 in June. He'd break his bat or throw his helmet practically every time he made an out. In Buffalo I sent Manny Sanguillen up to pinch-hit for Oliver against a lefthander. Later in the clubhouse he was still so mad that he slammed the door in my face and I decided to have it out with him the next night."

Pesky threatened to send Oliver back down to Gastonia or lower and added the avuncular tip that he might choke up on his bat somewhat. "I told him that's what my old teammate Ted Williams advised and Ted was the last .400 hitter. I got to say Oliver was coachable. He choked up and went from .200 to .280 in about a week."

"My dad was dying that year," Oliver recalls, "and I was going back and forth from Columbus to Portsmouth. It was amazing I had the season I did, hitting .315. My dad never did get to see me play in the major leagues. But he knew I was going to make it. He knew they couldn't keep me down."

Yet, at the same time, there were others in the Pirate organization whose major-league prospects were

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• **STRANGER HANDS HER \$100,000!** Mrs. X., of Georgia, a widow who was living alone, could not keep up the payments on her home. Hearing of Dr. Murphy, she contacted him, and he gave her the secret of the Psychic Perceptor. After using this one simple secret—out of the blue—a stranger knocked on her door and she got the \$100,000 she needed!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Murphy, D.D., D.R.S.,
Ph.D., LL.D., Fellow of the
Andhra Research University of India

Dr. Joseph Murphy is an internationally-known author, teacher, and lecturer. He is one of the foremost speakers on mental and spiritual laws in the world today. He is Minister of the Church of Divine Science, Los Angeles, California, and speaks to an audience of about fifteen hundred every Sunday.

Dr. Murphy conducts a daily radio program on self-development and frequently appears on television. Hundreds of thousands have attended his classes on the power of the subconscious mind.

• **HOW SHE GOT A FREE VACATION!** Mrs. Louise B. used her Psychic Perceptor to ask for a wonderful vacation. Shortly afterwards she received a gift of a European holiday for her entire family!

Dr. Murphy tells of "miraculous" healings, of men and women who were able to draw their loved ones to them—as bees to honey—with this secret, contact long-lost friends and relatives, strengthen and unite all family ties!

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According to Dr. Murphy, if you are poor, your Psychic Perceptor can give you the wealth of an emperor, if you are tired or rundown it can give you boundless strength and energy, if you lack friends it can surround you with an army of devoted men and women—boosters and supporters who will stand side by side with you against the world, if need be.

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Dr. Murphy reports how a medical doctor who had hurt his back, was sick in bed—and couldn't work or walk—was healed with his Psychic Perceptor! "Something happened to me," he said. "A strange feeling came over me; I felt a healing force flowing through me."

Reveals A Small Fortune In Dollar Bills!

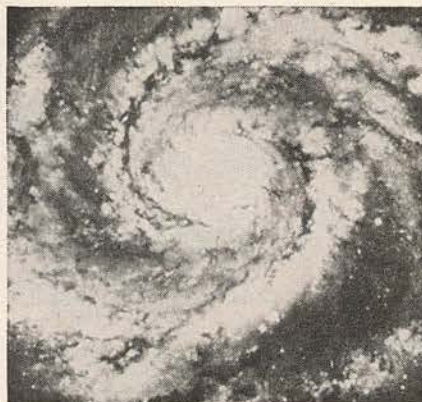
A woman in New York City says she asked her Psychic Perceptor to tell her the location of a box containing money. Soon she clearly saw a small black box hidden in the wall behind a picture of Lincoln. She saw a secret button, which could not be seen with the naked eye. When she pressed the button, an opening appeared containing the black box, which contained \$50,000 in cash!

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• **PROOF**—A young lady, whose doctor had given her 4 months to live, told her Psychic Perceptor to heal her. Six months later, her doctor said "A miracle has happened." Two years have passed and she says she is completely cured!

• **PROOF**—A young lady from Wichita, Kansas, states that the Psychic Perceptor method enabled her to reduce and control her weight. Her goal was 118 pounds, and—true to the law—she reduced 40 pounds!

• **PROOF**—Another woman saw the man of her dreams, with her Psychic Perceptor, and he was automatically attracted to her!

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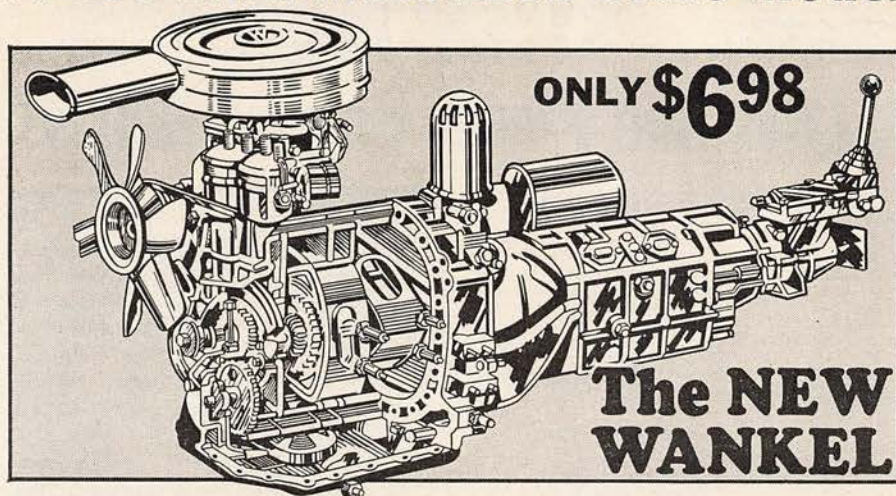
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equally inevitable. Bob Robertson, Richie Hebner, Manny Sanguillen, Gene Clines. To complicate matters, the Pirates already had an outfield of Roberto Clemente, Willie Stargell and Matty Alou, all of whom had bats that would be difficult to displace. Accordingly, Oliver was groomed as a first baseman.

"I knew what was going on," Oliver says. "I came here with better minor-league credentials than Hebner, Robertson and Sanguillen. Yet Hebner and Robertson got all the publicity. Compared to me the difference in abilities was like night and day. They were building Robertson up to be Ralph Kiner. Hebner was the next Pie Traynor. Me? I was nobody."

What happened, of course, was that Oliver was platooned, seeing most of his playing time at first base. Given Oliver's slow starts in 1969 and 1970 the arrangement was hardly the astonishing injustice Oliver makes it sound. He says, "Robertson and I fought for the first base job in 1969. After the first month of the season Robertson was sent back down to Columbus for not producing. The next year I came to spring training and had to fight Robertson for the job again—the guy who'd been sent down for not hitting. That was unfair. It showed me the Pirates wanted Robertson on first base and me in the outfield. And eventually that's what happened."

There were two factors that made that shuffle sensible. First was that Robertson had a big year in 1970, hitting .287 with 27 home runs. The second was that the Pirates traded Matty Alou to the Cardinals in the winter of 1971, opening up another outfield slot. Since Robertson had already shown he could hit for power on first base and Oliver was the better fielder, Oliver's move to center-field seemed a judicious decision.

However, Oliver's summers of discontent were far from over. In 1971 the Pirates brought up Gene Clines, a young outfielder with speed and a good bat. Clines hit .308, platooning in the 1971 Pirate outfield, largely filling in for Oliver. It was then that Oliver, not exactly the quiet man in years gone by, began his "play me or trade me" litany at even higher decibels.

"It wasn't up to Oliver to say whether he'd play every day or not," Pirate manager Bill Virdon says with



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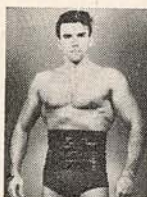
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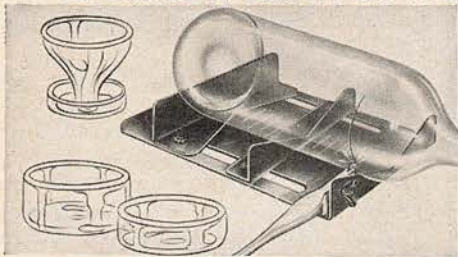
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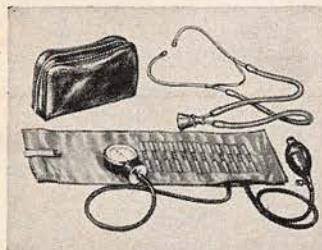
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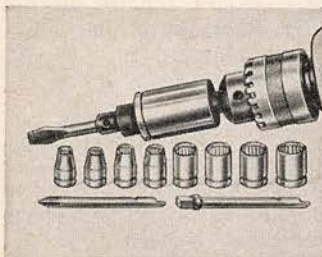
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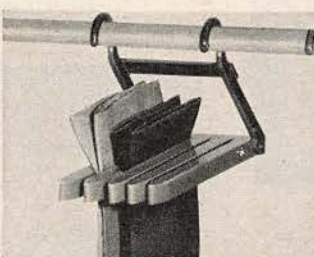


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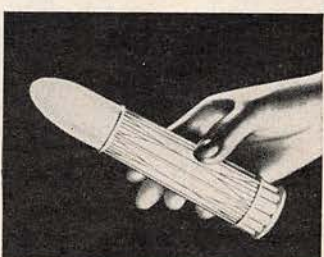
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some tartness, though he was merely a coach during Oliver's obstreperous 1971 season.

At the same time, Oliver's demands, while somewhat startling and even grating in print, are curiously inoffensive when delivered in person. In his considered judgment he regards himself as a hell of a baseball player and the sooner the Pirates grasp that fact the better off everyone concerned will be. As Pittsburgh second baseman Dave Cash says, "Nobody hits every time up. You have to accept that. But with Al, every time he doesn't hit it's a defeat. He won't accept not getting a hit."

That being so, he won't accept not playing, either. So he pushed, squawked and bellyached until they let him play regularly, and sure enough it turned out that he got off to a fast spring start playing every day. In fact, so far he's been doing exactly what he claimed he would do.

"People say I should be satisfied being here," Oliver muses. "But that's not true. They're lucky to have me. I had to speak out. Years ago my dad said, 'Son, when you do well you won't get the credit, so you've got to be strong minded and come true with what you're thinking.' He said, 'Al-ways walk proud—that's an Oliver trait!' That's what I tried to do and now the fans think I'm mean. Others are liked just hitting .280, but I've got to hit .300 to settle down the fans."

"You know," Donna Oliver says, feeding the baby, "everyone thinks Al has a terrible temper, is cocky and mean and never smiles. That's just the opposite of what he's like. There's one thing that's true about Al that no one ever writes."

"What's that?"

"They're always writing that Johnny Bench is so handsome, but I don't think he is. If you ask me Al is a lot more handsome than Johnny Bench. I wish someone would write Al was handsome for once."

The starting Pirate centerfielder gives a becomingly modest smile. "It's been quite a year," he admits, "starting every day, the All-Star game, and a baby."

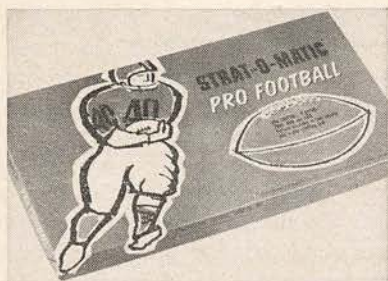
"In that order?" he is asked.

"You better believe it," Donna trills.

Oliver's handsome face crinkles in laughter. As he says these days, "Everything's in order." The hits are falling in. Regularly. ■

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TIME OUT WITH THE EDITORS!

WHICH SPORT ACTS LIKE AMERICA'S NATIONAL PASTIME?

For the sports fan, this is a glorious, if confusing, time of year. The World Series is being played, the hockey and basketball seasons are beginning, and football is in full swing. Some of us have clear-cut preferences among the four major spectator sports. But most of us suffer the pleasant bewilderment of not knowing where to focus our attention or when to switch channels. That's why it's so difficult to answer the old question: Which sport is really the national pastime? Instead, let's examine a related but significantly different question: Which of our major sports *acts* like America's No. 1 sport by fulfilling its obligations to the American public?

Hockey, though it has millions of dedicated fans in this country, still belongs to Canada. Basketball is an American invention but, in the minds of the public as reflected in polls, it still suffers from the stigma of its original purpose—to keep athletes in shape between the football and baseball seasons.

That leaves the old argument: Baseball vs. football. Both sports have the national scope to justify their claims to being No. 1. Each originated in the United States; each is followed—and played at one time or another—by a large percentage of the nation's population. But which sport acts as if it is, in fact, the sport for *all* Americans?

Take a look at football. The pro game, as a sport and business, hardly seems aimed at the average American. Sure, you can always catch a game on TV, but the true fan wants to be able to attend his favorite sporting event in person, at least occasionally. Today in almost all NFL cities that's damn near impossible. Just about every seat in every stadium is occupied by a season-ticket holder, who pays anywhere from \$40 to \$100 and up. Few teams set aside any seats for single-game sales, the only kind the average fan could afford.

Football's bias in favor of the affluent fan was underlined during last year's Super Bowl festivities. The NFL people proudly announced a privately commissioned Louis Harris poll that supported football's claim to being America's favorite sport (not surprising, since the poll was taken at the height of the football season). But the poll also revealed football's preference for certain kinds of fans. First, everyone under the age of

18 was excluded from the poll, though obviously a substantial proportion of all sports fans, and Americans, is under the age of 18.

The poll also broke down the answers according to education and income, and concluded that "Football is followed much more by the highest income, the college educated and professional people. . . . Baseball is followed more by the lower income, high school educated and skilled labor groups." Of course pro football would prefer to be No. 1 across the board, but it seems happy to concede the lower income and education groups to baseball as long as it can have the economic elite.

Meanwhile baseball still gears itself for the average American. Ticket prices remain among the best entertainment buys anywhere, with \$1 to \$1.50 being enough for a seat in almost any major-league park. Instead of ignoring youth, baseball, with its many promotions, actively caters to them. Since long before women's lib, baseball has made great efforts to attract women fans. Through inner city clinics and other special efforts, baseball also pays more attention to underprivileged children than does football.

Baseball's owners are hardly models of progressiveness, but on the whole they act more enlightened than their counterparts in football. In New York City, for example, while the Giants made plans to move to New Jersey to be closer to the affluent suburbs, the Yankees committed themselves to staying in a low-income area of the Bronx.

There is, of course, an economic reason for this difference between baseball and football—the difficulty of filling ballparks for baseball's long schedule. But we also believe there are other reasons. Perhaps baseball acts like a truly national sport for all Americans because it has its roots deeper in American democracy than does football. Baseball has been played and watched from the beginning by Americans of all classes, while football grew up on college campuses when only the elite were college educated.

Football may some day overtake baseball as the national pastime. But not, in our view, until it pays more attention to fans who aren't among the affluent.

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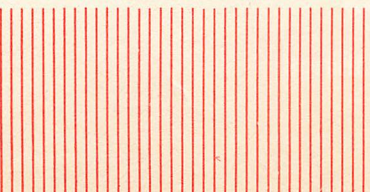
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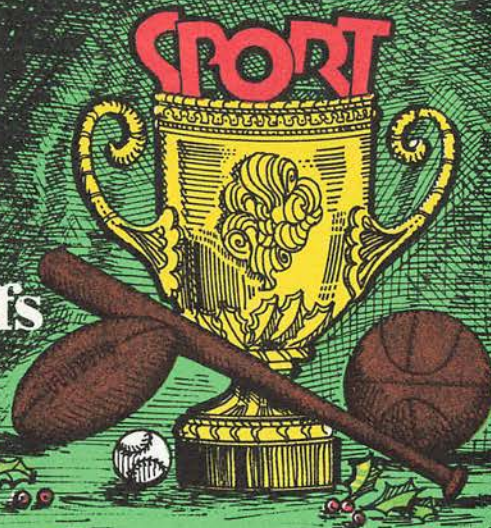
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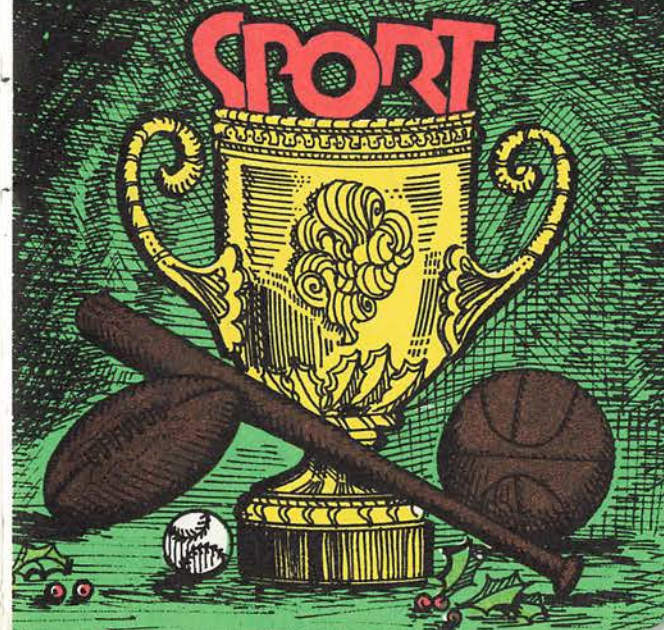
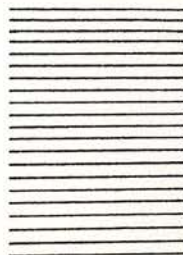
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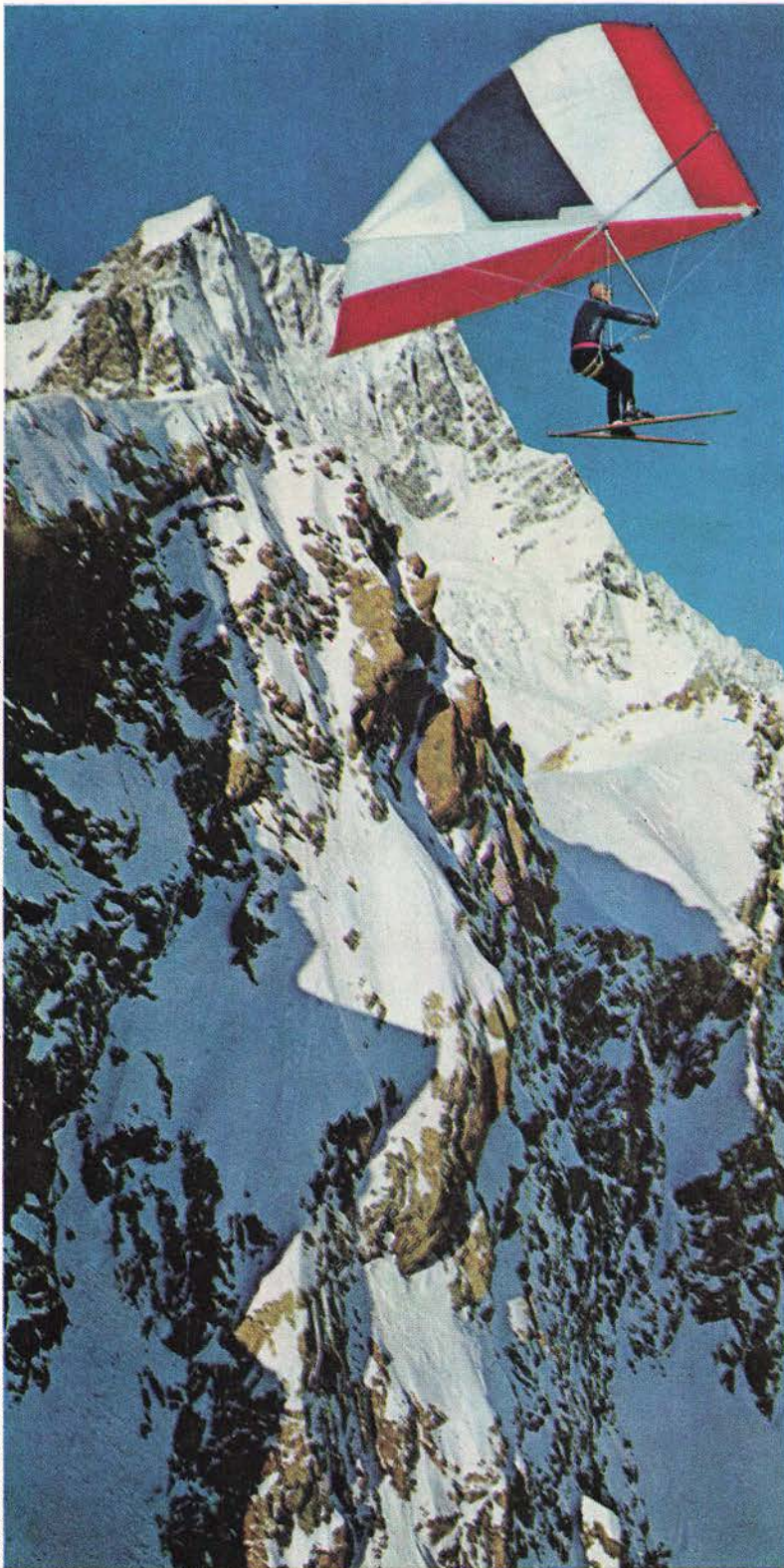
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